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THE CALIPHATE

ITS RISE, DECLINE, AND FALL

First Edition . . . . . published 1883
Second Edition . . . . . ,, 1891
Third Edition . . . . . ,, 1899
New and Revised Edition . . . . . ,, 1915

THE CALIPHATE
ITS RISE, DECLINE, AND FALL

FROM ORIGINAL SOURCES

BY

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1915

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PREFACE

In his Preface to the Second Edition, dated 1891, Sir William Muir says:—

"This volume was at first intended as an abridgment of the First Edition, or *Annals of the Early Caliphate*,[1] with continuation to the fall of the Abbassides; but I found, as I went on, the matter less compressible than I had hoped. The result, therefore, is much larger than I anticipated. I trust, however, that, its length notwithstanding, the narrative may be found not uninteresting; and I now offer it as a contribution towards the history of a period for which there are, as yet, but scanty materials in the English language.

"The authorities, excepting for the later portions, are purely Arabian; indeed, for the earlier there are no other. After Tabari, who died in the fourth century A.H., Ibn Athir (*d.* 630 A.H.), a singularly impartial annalist who compiled his work from all available sources, has been my chief guide. Towards the close, and especially for the brief chapter on the Caliphate under the Mameluke dynasty, I have drawn largely on Weil's admirable *Geschichte der Chalifen*,[2] which indeed has been my constant companion throughout. I gratefully acknowledge my obligations to the late Dr Weil. The more his great history is studied in connection with the original authorities, the more one is impressed with the vast research, the unfailing accuracy, and the dispassionate judgment of the author.

"I should mention here that the materials out of which our story is woven differ entirely from those for the Biography of Mahomet. For that, every incident of his

[1] Smith & Elder, 1883.

[2] Vols. I.-III. Mannheim, 1846-1851; IV. and V. Stuttgart, 1860-1862.

life and every phase of his character is illustrated by myriads of traditions of all degrees of credibility—authoritative, uncertain, fabulous—each tradition separate and independent, generally short and complete in itself. At his death the curtain drops at once upon the lifelike scene. Tradition collapses and the little that remains is curt and meagre. Of the chief "Companions," indeed, from their connection with the Prophet, we have sufficient notice, and special prominence is given to the lives of the first four Caliphs. But tradition, instead of being, as before, a congeries of separate statements, now assumes the form of connected narrative, and eventually the style of ordinary annals; and though there is now and then an exception, as in the minute and profuse description of such battles as Cadesiya, the Camel, and Siffin, the story as a rule becomes bald and jejune. These annals also are strictly divided by the year, the chapter for each year containing everything belonging to it, and as a rule nothing else. The continuity of subjects extending often over a long series of years is thus broken up, and some inconvenience and difficulty experienced in forming a connected narrative. But upon the whole, the materials are amply sufficient for the historian's purpose. . . .

"The reader will bear in mind that the Moslem year, as purely lunar, is eleven days shorter than the solar, and consequently loses about three years in every cycle of a hundred. The lunar month has also this peculiarity, that while, like the Jewish, the date indicates the age of the moon, the month itself gives no indication of the season of the year. The dates have usually been given throughout according to both the Moslem and the Christian notation.

"The Mussulman months, being unfamiliar to the English reader, have been indicated, as I trust in a more intelligible notation, by Roman numerals in the margin thus :—

Moharram . . .	i.	Rajab . . .	vii.
Safar	ii.	Shaban . . .	viii.
Rabi I. . . .	iii.	Ramadhan or Ramzan	ix.
Rabi II. . . .	iv.	Shawwal . . .	x.
Jumad I. . . .	v.	Dzul Cada . .	xi.
Jumad II. . . .	vi.	Dzul Hijj . . .	xii.

"I have not been very strict, and possibly not always consistent, in the rendering of proper names. Received forms have ordinarily been adhered to."

The Third Edition, published in 1899, was a reprint of the Second, with occasional emendations throughout.

In the present edition, the system of transliteration which has been followed is that of the Royal Asiatic Society, with some modification, which has been adopted in the new Edition of Sir William Muir's *Life of Mohammad*. A number of minute errors have been corrected, and it is hoped that few have escaped detection. The closer study of *The Caliphate* as well as of the *Life* leaves one with a strong impression of the Author's extreme accuracy in reproducing the statements of his authorities, as well as of the soundness of his judgment in weighing the evidence in support of two or more divergent accounts.

The Caliphate is based, as far as the Eastern side of the history goes, upon the Annals of Ibn al-Athīr, who lived and wrote at Mosul in the early part of the thirteenth century A.D. Sir William Muir read the work through and added a summary translation on the margin of his copy. Ibn al-Athīr's work is an epitome and continuation of that of the much older historian Ṭabari (*d.* 923 A.D.), of which the publication has only been completed in recent years. The value of Ṭabari's work, again, lies in the fact that it consists almost wholly of citations from much older sources, some of which are nearly contemporary with the events recorded. All of these lived under the 'Abbāsid dynasty, yet this fact does not appear to have prejudiced their results so much as one might expect. The Umeiyads are not, upon the whole, painted in much blacker colours than the 'Abbāsids, nor are the defects of the latter suppressed. The worst feature of all, from our point of view, their inhuman cruelty and disregard of life, is common to both. It is generally upon theological grounds that the Caliphs are acquitted or condemned; and the pictures of them which have come down to us are free from caricature and apparently true and fair.

Arabic history tends to be almost entirely anecdotal in character, and this no doubt helps one to picture to oneself the figures on the screen and the times in which

they moved. It is necessary, however, also to take account of the forces which shaped and governed the events. Sir William Muir has given full weight to one of the most powerful of these, the perennial jealousy of the northern and the southern Arabian tribes; but this is done in much more detail in Wellhausen's *Das arabische Reich und sein Sturz*,[1] and many of his observations have been incorporated in the present edition. Chapter LVIII. on the rival fortunes of the clans in Khorasan is drawn entirely from this work. Persons and events thus become connected together in the way of cause and effect; and the reader runs less risk of not seeing the wood for the trees.

The history of the Arab conquest of Egypt has yet to be written. A. J. Butler's monograph on that subject was published before the relative papyri were available. In the present edition the Arabic papyri from the Collection of the Archduke Rainer, edited by J. Karabacek, have been utilised, as well as the Greek papyri in the British Museum edited by H. I. Bell. From the latter the account of the administration at the end of Chapter XXII. has been drawn. The most important papyri bearing on the conquest itself have, however, it seems, yet to be published.

The narrative of the conquest of Syria in Chapters XIII. and XVII., is a condensed translation of *Mémoire sur la Conquête de la Syrie* by the late M. J. de Goeje, who was the leading Arabist of his day.

Lastly, the names of the leading schoolmen and men of letters have been mentioned in their proper place, as the influence of these has been after all more important and more enduring than that of the Caliphs. At the same time it must be remembered that this is a history of the Caliphate, and that in its later stages it was almost out of touch with the great literary and scientific movements of the time.

[1] Wellhausen delivered his closing lecture before retiring from his chair in the University of Gottingen, in August 1913. He took up the study of the literature of the Arabs only after that of the Hebrews; but he has thrown almost more light upon it than upon the latter. I had the advantage of reading a large part of this work which, like all that came from the hands of its author, is above praise in a MS. translation by M. G. W., which, it is hoped, may some day be completed and published for the advantage of English readers.

In conclusion, I have to thank the illustrious author and the publisher for permission to use *Das arabische Reich und sein Sturz* as has been done. The proof-sheets have been most carefully read by my friend Mr James Robson, M.A., Moncrieff Manse, Alloa, who has also verified the dates and other figures, and to whom any freedom from errors of detail which the work possesses is due. The sheets have also been read through and the Index checked and corrected by M. G. W. Lastly, I have to express my indebtedness to the printers for the extreme care with which a difficult type has been set up. The plan of Bagdad is reproduced by the kind permission of the Delegates of the Clarendon Press, from Le Strange's *Baghdad*.

T. H. Weir.

The University of Glasgow,
25*th March* 1915.

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ILLUSTRATING
THE CALIPHATE
Scale of Statute Miles.
0 50 100 200
35
40
45
25
20
15
FUSTAT
Ayla
Gulf of Suez
Gulf of Aqaba
Duma
Beni Kelb
Beni Abs
& Dhubyan
Tebuk
Beni Kodaa
N E F U D
Beni Tai
Teima
Jebel Aja
Beni Asad
Jebel Selma
Fadak
Battle
Beni Ghatafan & Fezara
Puzakha
Battle
Kheibar
W. al
Kora
J. Ohod
Jur
MEDINA
Rabadha
Dhul Kassa
Beni Suleim
Yenbo
Bedr
Tehama
Jidda
W. Mina
J. Arafat
MECCA
J. Thair
Beni Khozan
Tair
Sana
E G Y P T
N U B I A
R. Nile
R E D S E A
H E J A Z
T E H A M A
Y E M E
ABYSSINIA

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THE CALIPHATE
ITS RISE, DECLINE, AND FALL

CHAPTER I

DEATH OF MOḤAMMAD, ELECTION OF ABU BEKR

11 A.H. 632 A.D.

Death of Moḥammad, 13 Rabī' I. 11 A.H. 8th June 632 A.D.

It was Midsummer in the year 632 of our era when the Prophet of Arabia passed away.[1] He had been ten years at Medina, for it was now the eleventh year of the Hijra, that is, of the Flight from Mecca. Moḥammad had reached the age of threescore years and three; and up to the time of his last illness, which lasted but thirteen days, had been hale and vigorous. His death thus fell an unexpected shock upon Medina.

Abu Bekr absent.

For some days before, a burning fever had weakened him grievously and confined him to his bed. All through Sunday of the fatal week, he lay prostrate and at times delirious. Monday morning brought temporary relief. It was the hour of early prayer, and the worshippers had assembled in the square or court of the great Mosque, adjoining the chamber of 'Āisha in which she had been tenderly nursing her husband throughout his illness. Feeling stronger that morning, he rose from the couch, drew aside the curtain from the door, and moved softly into the Court, where Abu Bekr (as commissioned by him when laid aside) was conducting the service in his place. When prayers were ended Abu Bekr, seeing his Master to all appearance better, obtained leave to visit his wife who lived in the upper suburb of the city. After he left, the Prophet having spoken a few kindly words to his aunt and others crowding around

[1] See Sir William Muir's *Life of Moḥammad*, 4th ed., p. 480 ff.

A.H. 11.

him, was helped back into the chamber. Exhausted by the effort, his strength sank, and shortly after he breathed his last on the bosom of his favourite wife.

Abu Bekr's return; scene in court of Mosque.

It was yet but little after midday. Rumour spreading, the Mosque was soon crowded with a host of bewildered followers. Amongst them was 'Omar who arose, and in a wild and excited strain declaimed that the Prophet was not dead but in a trance, from which he would soon arise and root out the hypocrites from the land. Abu Bekr had by this time hurried back. He crossed the court not heeding his impetuous friend, and entered into 'Aisha's chamber. Stooping down he kissed the Prophet's face. "Dear to me as my father and mother wert thou. Sweet wert thou," he said, "in life, and sweet thou art in death." Then he went forth, and finding 'Omar still haranguing the people, put him aside with the memorable words:—*Whose worshippeth Mohammad, let him know that Mohammad is dead; but whose worshippeth God, let him know that God liveth and dieth not.* So saying, he recited certain verses from the Kor'an,[1] which no doubt had long dwelt upon his mind, as signifying that Mohammad was mortal and would die as other Prophets had died before him. Recognising the sacred words to bear a meaning that had never struck him before, 'Omar was speechless. "My limbs trembled," he would say when speaking of that memorable hour, "and I knew of a certainty that Moḥammad was dead indeed."

Men of Medīna meet to elect a chief.

The assembly in the court of the Mosque had now quieted down, when a messenger ran up breathless with a report that the men of Medīna had assembled to choose a ruler from amongst themselves. The moment was critical. The unity of the Faith was at stake. A divided power would fall to pieces, and all might be lost. The mantle of the Prophet must fall upon one Successor, and on one alone. The sovereignty of Islam demanded an undivided Caliphate; and Arabia would acknowledge no master but from amongst Ḳoreish. The die must be cast, and cast at once. Such, no doubt, were the thoughts that occurred to the two chief Companions of the Prophet on hearing this report; and so, accompanied

[1] Sūra, iii. 138: "And Moḥammad is nought but an apostle. Apostles have passed away before him. If then he die, or be killed, will you then turn back upon your heels?"

A.H. 11.

by Abu 'Obeida, another leading Chief, they hurried to the spot, if haply they might nip the conspiracy in the bud. On the way two friendly Citizens coming from the excited conclave, warned them of the risk they ran in entering it alone; but notwithstanding they hastened on. The men of Medina meanwhile, gathered in one of their rude Halls, were bent upon an independent course. "We have sheltered this nest of strangers," they cried. "It is by our good swords they have been able to plant the Faith. The Ruler of Medina shall be from amongst ourselves." They had already fixed their choice on Sa'd ibn 'Obada leader of the Khazraj, who sick of a fever lay covered up at the farther end of the Hall, when the three Companions entered. They were just in time; for had the Citizens elected Sa'd and pledged their troth to him, Medina might have been irretrievably compromised. 'Omar with his native vehemence was about to speak, when Abu Bekr, calm and firm, anticipated him thus:—"Every word," said he, "which ye, men of Medina, have uttered in your own praise is true, and more than true; but in noble birth and influence Koreish is paramount, and to none but them will Arabia yield obedience." "Then," cried they, "let there be one Chief amongst you and one from amongst us." "Away with you!" exclaimed 'Omar, "two cannot stand together"; and even Sa'd from beneath his covering muttered that to divide the power would only weaken it. High words ensued. Hobāb, at the side of Sa'd cried out, "Hear him not! Attend to me, for I am the *well-rubbed Palm-stem*.[1] If they refuse, expel them from the city." "The Lord destroy thee!" cried 'Omar; and Hobab returned the words. The altercation gaining heat and bitterness, Abu Bekr saw it must be stopped at any risk, and stepping forward said, "Ye see these two," pointing to 'Omar and Abu 'Obeida. "Choose ye now which of them ye will, and salute him as your Chief." "Nay," answered they both at once, "*Thou* hast already at the

Met by Abu Bekr, 'Omar, and Abu 'Obeida.

[1] Meaning a palm-trunk left for the beasts to come and rub themselves upon; metaphor for a person much resorted to for counsel. The whole phrase was, "I am their favourite and much rubbed stem, their special fruit-laden palm propped up (because of the weight of fruit), or well fenced with thorns (to protect the fruit)." He means he was their most valued possession. See Lane's *Arabic-English Lexicon*, p. 397, col. *a*, and p. 1034, col. *c*.

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Prophet's bidding, led the Prayers; thou art our Chief. Stretch forth thine hand." He did so, and they struck their hand on his (as is the Arab custom) in token of allegiance. Others were about to follow their example, when Hobab cried to one of the Khazraj about to take the pledge, "Wilt thou cut thine own kinsman's throat?" "Not so," the person thus addressed replied; "I only yield the right to whom the right is due." Whilst they yet hesitated, the Aus, jealous of the rival tribe and of Sa'd its chief, spake among themselves:—"If this man be chosen, the rule will be for ever with the Khazraj. Let us at once salute Abu Bekr as our Chief." The example set, group after group advanced to strike their hand on that of Abu Bekr, till none was left but Sa'd who still lay covered in the corner. Acknowledged thus by the men of Medina, there could be no doubt of Abu Bekr's acceptance by the Meccan "Refugees." He was not only one of themselves but the Prophet when laid aside, by appointing Abu Bekr to take his place at the daily prayers, had in a manner already indicated him as his Vicegerent. And so homage was done on all sides to Abu Bekr. He was saluted as the CALIPH,[1] or Successor of the Prophet.

Abu Bekr elected Caliph.

Burial of the Prophet.

The night passed in preparing the dead for sepulture. The body was washed and laid out, and the grave dug in 'Aisha's apartment where Mohammad had breathed his last. On the morrow the Citizens, men, women, and children, thronged the chamber to look once more upon their Prophet's face. And then the remains were reverently committed to the dust.

Abu Bekr's inaugural address.

The funeral over, and the court of the great Mosque still crowded with the mourners, Abu Bekr ascended the pulpit and, sitting down, was acknowledged CALIPH by acclamation. Then he arose and said:—"Oh people! Now I am Ruler over you, albeit not the best amongst you. If I do well, support me; if ill, then set me right. Follow the True, wherein is faithfulness; eschew the False, wherein is treachery. The weaker amongst you shall be as the stronger with me, until that I shall have redressed his wrong; and the stronger shall be as the weaker until, if the Lord will, I shall have taken from him that which he

[1] In Arabic, *Khalifa*.

hath wrested. Leave not off to fight in the ways of the Lord; whosoever leaveth off, him verily shall the Lord abase. Obey me as I obey the Lord and his Prophet; wherein I disobey, obey me not. Now rise to your prayer, and God have mercy upon you!" The assembly stood up for prayer, and Abu Bekr, for the first time as Caliph, filled the place of Moḥammad.[1] A.H. 11.

'Alī delays doing homage.

The supreme power thus passed, without let or hindrance, into the hands of Abu Bekr. Sa'd ibn 'Obāda, chagrined at being superseded, held aloof. 'Alī is also said to have refrained from doing homage till after the death of Fāṭima his wife. The 'Alid party pretend that he looked to the Caliphate himself. But there is nothing in his previous life, or in the attitude of the Prophet towards him, that warrants any such surmise. He had indeed a grievance, but of quite a different kind. The day after her father's death, Fāṭima preferred a claim to his share in the crown lands of Kheibar. Abu Bekr disallowed the claim; holding that the revenues were destined, as Moḥammad had himself desired, for purposes of State. Fāṭima took the denial so much to heart that she held altogether aloof from the Caliph during the short remainder of her life. And hence it was only after her death that 'Alī recognised with any cordiality the title of Abu Bekr to the Caliphate.[2] Fāṭima was the last surviving child of Moḥammad. His other three daughters, two of whom had in succession married 'Othmān, were already some time dead. Khadīja had borne him two sons, but both died in infancy at Mecca. A third, the only other son the Prophet ever had, was born at Medīna by the slave-girl Mary, and died sixteen months old. No

Fāṭima mother of Al-Ḥasan and Al-Ḥosein.

[1] Presidency at public prayer was ever in Islām the sign of chief command, whether in civil or in military life.

[2] Tradition regarding 'Alī is coloured and distorted by the canvass of a political faction which in the end assumed the *divine* right of succession as vested in 'Alī and his descendants. There is not a shadow of proof that 'Alī himself ever made any claim of the kind, or that any such claim was made by others for him during the Caliphates of Abu Bekr and 'Omar. It was not till the election of a successor on the death of 'Omar that he became a candidate, and even then his claim was grounded on being one of the chief Companions rather than on any supposed right in virtue of his relationship to Moḥammad by marriage with his daughter.

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issue of the Prophet thus survived in the male line. But two grandsons, Al-Hasan and Al-Hoseín, were left by his daughter Fatima. They were now but six or seven years of age.

How far Abu Bekr's election formed a precedent.

With Mohammad ceased the theocratic power; but his kingly functions, as ruler over all Islám, descended. According to Arabian notions, the leader of a nation, like the Chieftain of a tribe, is the head and representative of his people, and the nomination remains invalid till confirmed by their homage. 'Omar, in after days, held that the irregular election of Abu Bekr (referring apparently to the scene enacted in the Hall) should not be a precedent. It was, he said, an event the happiest in its consequences for Islám, but justified only by the urgency of the moment. What might have been the issue if any son of Mohammad had survived it is useless now to speculate. But certainly the hereditary descent of kingly power was foreign to the sentiment of Arabia. As matters stood, Mohammad seems to have shrunk from anticipating the contingency of his own death, and had made no preparation for what might follow. But in so far as we may suppose him to have felt his illness mortal and death impending, the nomination of Abu Bekr to conduct the public Prayers (acknowledged mark of chief or delegated authority) may be held the natural indication of a wish that he should succeed.[1] Apart from the pretensions of the men of Medina, which immediately died away, there was in the election neither doubt nor hesitancy. The notion of divine right, or even of preferential claim, resting in the Prophet's family, was the growth of an altogether later age.

Parties at Medina.

It may be necessary here to recall to the reader not fresh from the study of the Prophet's life, the state of parties at the present juncture. The *Men of Medina* were the old inhabitants of the City who had received Mohammad on his escape from Mecca, and supported his cause;[2] they now embraced practically the whole *native* population of Medina, since the party that opposed him on his first arrival had gradually succumbed before his growing power. They were divided into two tribes, the *Aus* and the

[1] See *Life of Mohammad*, p. 500.

[2] Hence called *Anṣār*, or Helpers.

Khazraj, jealous of each other as we have seen. Beside these were the *Refugees*, those namely who had followed Mohammad in exile from Mecca or elsewhere, and were now settled at Medīna. Again, *Companion* was a title of honour given to all those who had enjoyed the special friendship of the Prophet. A few words may also be added here to revive the reader's recollection of the three Companions who turned the scale at the election of the Caliph. A.H. 11.

Abu Bekr, threescore years of age, was somewhat short in stature, of spare frame, rounded back, and stooping gait. His face thin, smooth, and fair, nose aquiline and sharp, forehead high, eyes deep seated and far apart. His hair scanty; the beard, for many years white, now dyed red. His countenance still in old age handsome; the expression mild, but wise and resolute. To him faith in the Prophet had become a second nature and, now that his Master was gone, the disciple lived but to fulfil his will. It was this that nerved a disposition naturally soft and yielding, and made Abu Bekr, of all the followers of Mohammad, the truest, firmest, and most resolute. Abu Bekr.

'Omar, fifteen years younger, differed from Abu Bekr both in frame and temperament. Broad shouldered and tall, he towered above the crowd. Somewhat dark in complexion, the face was fresh and ruddy. His head was now bald; the beard dyed like his friend's; his stride long and his presence commanding. Naturally hasty and passionate, he would twist his moustache when angry and draw it downwards to his mouth. But time had mellowed temper; and, beneath an imperious manner, he was bland and courteous. Attachment to Mohammad had, on these two friends, an effect exactly opposite. That which braced the soft nature of Abu Bekr, served but to abate the vehemence of 'Omar. Both stood in a like relation to the Prophet. Ḥafṣa, 'Omar's daughter, was one of Mohammad's favourite wives; but 'Āisha, the child of Abu Bekr, was Queen in his affections to the end. 'Omar.

On these two men at this moment hung the future of Islām. The third, Abu 'Obeida, was between them in age. Thin, tall, and sinewy, he was bald and with little beard. Mild, unassuming and unwarlike, Abu 'Obeida was yet destined to take a leading part in the conquest of Syria. Abu 'Obeid.

CHAPTER II

EXPEDITION TO SYRIAN BORDER

11 A.H. 632 A.D.

Syrian expedition 11 A.H. 632 A.D.

ABU BEKR had soon an occasion for showing his resolve to carry out to the utmost the will of Mohammad in things both great and small.

Usāma appointed by Mohammad to command the force.

Just before he fell sick, the Prophet had given orders for an expedition to the Syrian border. It was to avenge the disaster which three years before had befallen the Moslem arms on the field of Muta. In that reverse, Zeid ibn Haritha, the bosom friend of Mohammad, who led the army, fell; and so, distinctly to mark the object of the expedition, his son Usāma, though still young, was nominated by Mohammad to the command, and bidden to avenge his father's death. The camp, including all available fighting men, had been formed at the Jurf, a little way outside Medina on the Syrian road. During the Prophet's sickness the force remained inactive there, uncertain of the issue. When the fatal event took place, Usama broke up the camp, and carrying back the banner received at the hands of Mohammad, planted it in the court of the great Mosque, close by the door of 'Āisha's apartment.

Abu Bekr deaf to reclamations against its despatch.

The day following his inauguration, Abu Bekr took up the banner, and restoring it to Usama, in token that he was still commander, bade the army again assemble and encamp at the Jurf as it had done before; not a man was to be left behind. Obeying his command, the fighting men of Medina and its neighbourhood all flocked to the camp, even 'Omar amongst the number. While yet preparing to depart, the horizon darkened suddenly. Report of the

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Prophet's illness, soon followed by tidings of his death, had spread like wildfire over the land. From every side came rumours of disloyalty, and of resolve to cast off the yoke of Islām. The sense of the army, and of Usāma himself, was strongly against leaving the City thus defenceless, and the Caliph exposed to risk of sudden danger. 'Omar was deputed to represent all this to Abu Bekr, and also to urge (a request which Mohammad already had refused) that, if the expedition must proceed, a more experienced general should command. To the first request Abu Bekr replied, calm and unmoved:—"Were the City swarming round with packs of ravening wolves and I left solitary and alone, the force should go; not a word from my Master's lips shall fall to the ground." At the second demand the Caliph's anger kindled:—"The mother be bereft of thee, O son of Al-Khattab!" he said, seizing 'Omar by the beard:—"Shall the Prophet of the Lord appoint a man to the command and I, deposing him, appoint another in his place?" So 'Omar returned, with neither object gained.

He accompanies Usāma a little way on foot.

When all was ready for the march, Abu Bekr repaired to the camp, and accompanied the force a little way on foot. "Be mounted," said Usāma to him, "or else I will dismount and walk by thee." "Not so," replied Abu Bekr; I will not mount; I will walk and soil my feet a little moment in the ways of the Lord. Verily, every step trodden in the ways of the Lord is equal to the merit of manifold good works and wipeth out a multitude of sins." After a while he stopped, and said to Usāma:—"If it be thy will, give 'Omar leave that he may return for strength and counsel with me to the city." So he gave him leave, and Abu Bekr returned with 'Omar to Medina.

Usāma returns victorious.

The ostensible object of Usāma's expedition was to avenge the death of his father upon the tribe of Ghassān who had slain him upon the field of Mūta, and Ibn Sa'd states that he did in fact kill the man who had slain him. On the other hand the tribemen actually attacked were of Ḳoḍa'a, and the point at which the march culminated was apparently Obna, the ancient Jabneh (Josh. xv. 11), close to the Mediterranean, between Askelon and Jaffa. The time occupied was one month or at most two, and when we deduct the days spent in marching from and back to

Medina, it will appear that this campaign was little more than a freebooters' raid. This is proved by the fact that Usama returned to the Wadi al-Kora without having lost a man.

Meanwhile stirring events had been transpiring at Medina.

CHAPTER III

MEDĪNA THREATENED

11 A.H. 632 A.D.

Effect of Abu Bekr's action; iv.-v. 11 A.H. June-July 632 A.D.

In after days Abu Bekr was used to look back with just pride upon having despatched Usāma's force the universal reclamation notwithstanding. Public opinion was not long in justifying the act. His bold front struck the Bedawin mind with the stability of his rule. If the leaders at Medina had not been confident in strength at home they would not have sent away their army; and the Arabs reasoning thus, were restrained from much that they might otherwise have done. Still the position was critical, and at times alarming.

His courageous attitude.

It was indeed a thing for the brave old Caliph to be proud of. "The Arabs," we read, "were on all sides rising in rebellion. Apostasy and disaffection raised their heads; Christians and Jews began to stretch out their necks; and the Faithful were as a flock of sheep without a shepherd, their Prophet gone, their numbers few, their foes a multitude." In face of all this Abu Bekr had sent away beyond recall his only force, and left Medina open and apparently defenceless.

Insurrection throughout Arabia.

There was danger all around, for towards the close of Mohammad's life, three rivals, incited by the success of Mohammad, laid claim to the prophetic office, and had already raised the standard of rebellion. In the south, insurrection was hardly quelled by the death of the "Veiled Prophet" of the Yemen,[1] when, on tidings of the decease of Mohammad, it burst forth again with redoubled violence. Northwards in the centre of the Peninsula, Museilima had

[1] *Life of Mohammad*, p. 478 f.

A.H. 11. detached the powerful tribes around Al-Yemáma from their allegiance. And to the north-east, nearer home, Toleiha the third Pretender, had become openly and dangerously hostile. From every quarter, in rapid succession, came news of spreading disaffection. The Collectors of tithe (an impost hateful to the Bedawin), the Legates and Residents of Mohammad throughout the provinces,—all, in fact, who represented the authority of Islám, fled or were expelled. The Faithful wherever found were massacred, some of the confessors suffering a cruel death. Mecca and At-Taif wavered at the first; but in the end, through the strong influence of Koreish, stood firm. They were almost alone. Here and there some few tribes, under loyal, or it might be temporising Chiefs, maintained the semblance of obedience; but they were hardly discernible amidst the seething mass of rebellion. 'Amr, hurrying back from 'Omán (whither he had been sent as an Ambassador by Mohammad at the Farewell Pilgrimage) saw, as he passed, the whole of Central Arabia either in open apostasy or ready to break away on the first demand of tithe; and his report filled the Citizens of Medina with dismay. In truth Islám had never taken firm hold of the distant provinces; and as for the Bedawin, Mohammad himself had frequent cause to chide their fickleness. It was fear of punishment, and lust of plunder under the Prophet's banner, rather than attachment to the Faith, which hitherto had held in check these wild sons of the desert. The restraints and obligations of Islám were ever irksome and distasteful; and now rid of them, they were again returning to their lawless life.

Danger of Medina.

As report after report came in of fresh defection, Abu Bekr could but instruct his scattered officers, wherever they were able, to hold together the loyal few, bravely trusting to tide over the crisis until Usáma's force returned. For the immediate defence of Medina he took such measures as were possible. The faithful tribes in the neighbourhood were called in, and pickets posted at the various approaches to the City. The turbulent clans in the near desert were the first to assume a threatening attitude. The Beni 'Abs and Dhubyán massed there in such numbers "that the land was straitened by them," and they parted into two bodies, one to Ar-Rabadha, the other to Dhu'l-Kassa, the first station

from Medina on the road to Nejd. The false prophet Toleiha sent his brother to encourage the insurgents; but they still vacillated between his claims and those of Islam. At last they bethought themselves of a compromise. A deputation offered to hold by Islam and its ritual, if only they were excused the tithe. The strangers bearing this message were welcomed by the chiefs of Medina, but by the Caliph their advances were indignantly rejected. He would relax not a tittle of the legal dues. "If ye withhold but the tether of a tithed camel," said Abu Bekr sharply, "I will fight you for it." With this refusal they retired, and also with the intelligence that the City had but few defenders left. Now was the moment, not for plunder only, but for a decisive blow upon Medina. Abu Bekr foreseeing this redoubled his precautions. He strengthened the pickets, and set over them the only three chief men remaining with him, 'Ali, Talha, and Az-Zubeir. For the people at large he appointed the great Mosque a rendezvous. "The land hath rebelled against us," he said, "and they have spied out our nakedness and the weakness of our defence. Ye know not whether they will come upon you by night or come upon you by day, or which of you may be first attacked. Wherefore be ye vigilant and ready." A.H. 11.

Attack repelled.

And so it came to pass. They tarried but three days, when a surprise was attempted from Dhu'l-Kassa. The outposts were on the alert and kept the assailants at bay, while the main-guard was hurried up on camels from the Mosque. The Bedawin, hardly prepared for so warm a reception, fled back upon their reserves. They were pursued; but the insurgents, blowing out their water-skins, cast them, thus inflated, before the camels of the Muslims, which unused to the stratagem took fright and fled back to the Mosque. None were killed or wounded, but the Rebels were emboldened by the discomfiture. Abu Bekr anticipating renewed attack, called out every man capable of bearing arms, and spent the night in marshalling his force. Next morning while yet dark, he led forth the little band himself in regular array with centre and two wings. The enemy were taken by surprise at early dawn, and as the sun arose were already in full flight. Abu Bekr drove them with

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slaughter out of Dhu'l-Kassa and, leaving a portion of his little force as an outpost there, returned to Medina.

Good effect of the victory.

The affair was small, but the effect was great. As failure would have been disastrous, perhaps fatal, to Islam, so was victory the turning-point in its favour. The power of the Prophet's Successor to protect the city even without an army was noised abroad. And soon after, the spirits of the Muslims rose as they saw some Chiefs appear bringing in the tithes. The tribes whom these represented were indeed few compared with the apostate hordes: but it was an augury of brighter days. The first thus to present their legal offerings to the Caliph were deputations from the Beni Temim and Beni Tai'. Each was ushered into his presence as an Embassy. "Nay," said Abu Bekr, "they are more than that; they are Messengers of glad tidings, true men, and defenders of the Faith." And the people answered:—"Even so; now the good things that thou didst promise do appear."

Saving of Islām due to Abu Bekr.

Tradition delights to ascribe with pious gratitude the preservation of Islam to the aged Caliph's faith and fortitude. "On the death of Mohammad" (so runs our record), "it wanted but little and the Faithful had perished utterly. But the Lord strengthened the heart of Abu Bekr, and stablished us thereby in the resolve to give place not for one moment to the Apostates;—giving answer to them but in these three words, *Submission*, *Exile*, or *the Sword*." It was the simple faith of Abu Bekr which fitted him for the task, and made him carry out the law of his Master to the letter. But for him Islam would have melted away in compromise with the Bedawin tribes, or, likelier still, have perished in the throes of birth.

CHAPTER IV

RETURN OF USĀMA. EXPEDITION SENT AGAINST THE APOSTATE TRIBES THROUGHOUT ARABIA

11 A.H. 632 A.D.

Usāma's return, vi. 11 A.H. Sept. 632 A.D.

Usāma at last returned from his foray; and Medina was at once relieved from further danger. The fifth of the booty (reserved by sacred ordinance for the State) was delivered to the Caliph, and by him distributed among the people. The expedition had served its purpose of satisfying Abu Bekr's conscience, and perhaps also of throwing dust in the eyes of the hostile Bedawin by making them believe that he was stronger than he really was.[1]

Expedition against Beni 'Abs and Dhubyān.

Abu Bekr lost no time in now following up the advantage he had already gained over the insurgents. Driven back from Dhu'l Ḳaṣṣa they had retired to Ar-Rabadha, and vented their anger in destroying by cruel deaths some faithful followers of the Prophet still left amongst them there. Deeply moved at their fate, Abu Bekr took an oath "that he would by the like death destroy as many of them as they had slain, or even more."

Abu Bekr chastises rebel tribes at Rabadha.

Leaving Usāma in command of the City and also of the army left there for a little to recruit, Abu Bekr with a small force marched out towards Ar-Rabadha. The chief men expostulated against his going forth to fight in person. Were a Commander killed in action, his place could easily be filled; but if the Caliph fell, their head and master would be gone. "Nay," replied Abu Bekr; "but I will go forth, and will be your comrade even as one of your own selves." So they marched on, and coming up with the enemy completely discomfited them, killing some,

[1] Ibn al-Athīr, ii., 254.

A.H. 11. and taking others prisoners. The Beni 'Abs and Dhubyan fled to Toleiha, and joined his army at Al-Buzakha. Thereupon Abu Bekr confiscated their pasture-lands to be in all time to come a reserve for the stud and camels of the State. The rebels after a time tendered their submission, and eventually found ample compensation in the conquered lands beyond Arabia.

Islām must be reimposed on all Arabia.

Satisfied with this success, the Caliph returned to Medina. The army by this time was refitted. The tithes had begun to come in from neighbouring tribes in token of submission. Medina was no longer in peril, and the Citizens breathed freely. But a heavy burden still lay upon the Caliph. Save a remnant here and there, faith was vanishing, and the Arabs throughout the Peninsula were relapsing into apostasy. Yet Islam was to be the Faith of all Arabia;—"Throughout the land there shall be no second creed," was the behest of Mohammad upon his deathbed. False prophets must be crushed; rebels vanquished; apostates reclaimed or else exterminated; and the supremacy vindicated of Islam. It was, in short, the mission of Abu Bekr to redeem the dying Prophet's words.

Eleven expeditions despatched to different parts of Arabia.

With this great purpose, Abu Bekr went forth a second time to Dhu'l Kassa, and summoned there the whole available forces of Islam and all the loyal Chieftains. These he divided into eleven independent Columns, and over each appointed a distinguished leader, to whom (following the example of his Master) he presented a banner. Arabia was parcelled out, and each detachment given a quarter to reclaim, with marching orders where to begin and what course to take. Thus Khalid was to subdue Toleiha; and 'Ikrima with Shurahbil, Museilima. Al-Muhajir was sent to the Yemen; Al-'Ala to Al-Bahrein; Hodheifa to Mahra; and 'Amr against the Beni Koda'a. By this great scheme, in course of time no spot would be left unconquered. The troops retained at home were few; but few were needed now.

Proclamation to apostates to repent. viii. 11 A.H. Oct. 632 A.D.

Having despatched the various expeditions, Abu Bekr returned to Medina. There his first concern was to publish a summons to apostate tribes, commanding them everywhere to repent and submit themselves, on which condition they should be pardoned and received back into Islam.

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Such as refused would be attacked, their fighting men cut to pieces and their women and children taken captive. This summons was sent by the hand of Envoys to every province and rebellious tribe. The Azān, or Call to Prayer, was to be the test of faith: if that were heard and responded to, good and well; if not, the people were to be held as apostate and punished to the bitter end.

Abu Bekr never again went forth to fight.

Abu Bekr never again left Medina to lead his troops. Some say that he regretted this; but it is not likely that he did. Medīna, the Capital, was his proper place. From it, as a central point, he was able to direct the movement of his Commanders all over the Peninsula; and with operations in so many different quarters to control, he could not have been better placed.

No chief Companion appointed to a command.

It is not quite so clear why he appointed none of the more distinguished Companions to any chief command. The same was afterwards the policy of 'Omar, who used to say that he refrained from doing so, partly because the liability to render an account would have implied subjection inconsistent with their dignity, but chiefly to strengthen his own hands by having them about him to advise. This latter reason no doubt also weighed with Abu Bekr, who used to take council on all important matters with the leading Companions. Still, it is singular that men like 'Alī and Az-Zubeir, so prominent in the battles of Mohammad, should now for the moment disappear from operations in the field.

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CHAPTER V

RECOVERY OF ARABIA. CAMPAIGN OF KHĀLID

11 A.H. 632-633 A.D.

The struggle of a year for Arabia's recovery.

IT was indeed time for decisive action. But a few weeks before and the entire Peninsula was submissive to the claims of Mohammad both as Prophet and King. Now all was on a sudden changed, and the Arabs abjuring Islam were fast relapsing into apostasy and independence. It took a year to reclaim the Peninsula, a year of hard fighting and obstinate resistance in every corner of the land. It was the indomitable spirit breathed by Mohammad into his faithful followers that alone crowned their efforts with victory. The Arabs at last were forced back, in sullen mood and with unwilling step, to confess the faith of Mohammad and submit themselves to his Successor.

Details meagre and hazy.

A brief outline of the twelvemonths' campaign will suffice; for tradition, up to the Prophet's death clear and copious, now suddenly becomes curt, obscure, and disconnected. The scene of confusion that prevailed throughout the land, presents itself to us in meagre, dim, and hazy outline. With Islam struggling thus for very life, its followers thought at the moment only of the lance and sword; and when the struggle at last was over, little remained but the sense of escape from a terrible danger. No date is given for the many battles fought throughout the year. We can only guess at the sequence of events.

Such being the case, we shall begin with the campaign of Khālid on the north and east, and then take up the other Provinces in order, as they lie around the coast, from Al-Bahrein on the Persian Gulf to the Yemen on the Red Sea.

Campaign of Khālid

A.H. 11.

I. *Against Ṭoleiḥa*

Khālid ibn Welīd.

After Abu Bekr and 'Omar, the most prominent figure in the early days of Islām is without doubt that of Khālid son of Al-Welid. More to him than to any other is it due that the Faith so rapidly recovered its standing, and thereafter spread with such marvellous rapidity. A dashing soldier, brave even to rashness, his courage was tempered by a cool and ready judgment. His conduct on the battlefields which decided the fate of the Persian Empire, and of the Byzantine rule in Syria, ranks him as one of the greatest generals of the world. Over and again, always with consummate skill and heroism, he cast the die in crises where loss would have been destruction to Islām. From the carnage of his arms he was named *The Sword of God;* and so little care had he for loss of life, that he would wed the widow of his enemy on the field still sodden with his own soldiers' blood. He had already distinguished himself in the annals of Islām. While fighting on the side of Ḳoreish, the Prophet's defeat at Oḥod was due mainly to his prowess. After conversion, his was the only column which, on the capture of Mecca, disobeyed by shedding blood; and again shortly after, the cruel massacre of an unoffending tribe brought down upon him the Prophet's stern reproof. On the field of Mūta he gave signal promise of his great future when, the Muslim army having been routed by Roman legions and its leaders one after another slain, he saved the shattered remnants from destruction by skilful and intrepid tactics. It was this Khalid whom Abu Bekr now sent forth against the rebel Prophets Ṭoleiḥa and Museilima.

Khālid marches against Ṭoleiḥa.

His column, by far the strongest, was composed of the flower both of the Refugees and of the Citizens of Medina. To divert the enemy's attention, Abu Bekr gave out his destination as for Kheibar; and, to strike the greater terror, that the Caliph himself would join it there with a fresh contingent. Khālid, however, was not long in quitting the northern route. Striking off to the right, he made direct for the mountain range, seat of the Beni Ṭai', and not distant from the scene of Ṭoleiḥa's revolt among the Beni Asad.

A.H. 11.

Ṭoleiha.

Of the doctrines of Ṭoleiha, and the other pretenders to prophetic office, we know little; nor indeed anything at all to show wherein the secret of their influence lay. So far as appears, their worship was a mere travesty of Islām. Some doggerel verses and childish sayings are all that the contemptuous voice of tradition has transmitted of their teaching. That four Pretenders (for Sajah the Prophetess was also such) should just then have arisen in different parts of Arabia and drawn multitudes after them, would seem to imply something deeper than senseless rhymes, and more specious than petty variations of the Muslim rite. It is not unreasonable to assume that the spiritual sense of Arabia had been quickened by the preaching of Mohammad, and that his example had both suggested the claims of others, and contributed thus rapidly to their success. Jealousy of Mecca and Medina, moreover, and impatience of the trammels of Islām, were powerful incentives for the Bedawīn tribes to cast in their lot with these Pretenders. Thus the Beni Ghaṭafān who aforetime were in league with the Beni Asad, had recently fallen out with them and lost some pasture-land. 'Oyeina their chief now counselled a return to their old relations; "Let us go back," he said, "to the ancient alliance which before Islām we had with the Beni Asad, for never since we gave it up have I known our pasture boundaries. A Prophet of our own is better than a Prophet of Koreish. Beside all this, Mohammad is dead and Ṭoleiha is alive." So saying, 'Oyeina with 700 of his warriors joined Ṭoleiha and his army at Al-Buzākha.

Bedawīn jealousy of Mecca and Medina.

Beni Ṭai' reclaimed.

On first hearing of Ṭoleiha's heresy, Mohammad had sent an Envoy to rally the faithful amongst the Beni Asad and thus crush the Pretender. But the cause gaining ground, was now supported by the neighbouring Beni Ṭai', as well as by insurgents who flocked to Ṭoleiha after their defeat at Rabadha; and so the Envoy had to fly. The great family of Ṭai', however, was not wholly disloyal, for (as above mentioned) the legal dues had been already presented to Abu Bekr on behalf of some of them. 'Adī their loyal chief was therefore now sent forward by Khālid in the hope of detaching his people from Ṭoleiha's cause. He found them in no friendly humour. "The father of the foal!" they cried (such was the sobriquet they contemptuously

used for Abu Bekr[1]), "thou shalt not persuade us to do homage to him." "Think better of it," replied 'Adi; "an army approacheth which ye cannot withstand. Ye shall know full soon he is no foal but the lusty stallion. Wherefore see ye to it." Alarmed at his words, they begged for time to recall their fellows who had joined Ṭoleiḥa; "for," said they, "he will surely hold them as hostages, or else put them to death." So Khalid halted three days, and in the end the whole tribe not only tendered submission but joined him with 1000 horse, "the flower of the land of Ṭai' and the bravest of them." A.H. 11.

Battle of Buzākha.

Thus reinforced, Khālid advanced against Ṭoleiḥa. On the march his army was exasperated by finding the bodies of two of their scouts, one a warrior of note named 'Okkāsha, who had been slain and left by Ṭoleiḥa to be trampled on upon the road. The armies met at Al-Buzākha, and the combat was hot and long. At last the tide of battle was turned by a strange utterance of Ṭoleiḥa who was fighting in his prophetic garb of hair. 'Oyeina held on bravely with his 700 when, the situation becoming critical, he turned to Ṭoleiḥa saying, "Hath any message come to thee from Gabriel?" "*Not yet*," answered the Prophet; a second time he asked, and received the same reply. "Yes," cried Ṭoleiḥa a little after, "a message now hath come." "And what is it?" inquired 'Oyeina eagerly. "Thus saith Gabriel to me, *Thou shalt have a millstone like unto his, and an affair shall happen that thou wilt not forget.*" "Away with thee!" cried 'Oyeina scornfully; "no doubt the Lord knoweth that an affair will happen that thou shalt not soon forget! Ho, every man to his tent!" So they turned to go; and thereupon the army fled.

Ṭoleiḥa's sequel.

Ṭoleiḥa escaped with his wife to Syria. The sequel is curious. At the first he took refuge with another tribe on the Syrian frontier. When the Beni Asad were pardoned he returned to them, and embraced Islam. Passing Medina soon after on pilgrimage to Mecca, he was seized and carried to Abu Bekr who set him at liberty, saying, "Let him alone. The Lord hath now verily guided him into the right path." When 'Omar succeeded, Ṭoleiḥa presented himself to do

[1] *Abu Bekr* means "Father of the young camel"; so they called him by the nickname *Abu'l-Faṣīl*, "Father of the foal."

A.H. 11. homage. At first 'Omar spoke roughly to him,—"Thou art he that killed 'Okkasha and his comrade too. I love thee not." "Was it not better," answered the quondam prophet, "that they by my hand should obtain the crown of martyrdom, rather than that I by theirs should have perished in hell-fire?" When he had sworn allegiance, the Caliph asked him concerning his oracular gift, and whether anything yet remained of it. "Ah," he replied, "it was but a puff or two, as from a pair of bellows." So he returned to his tribe and went forth with them to the war in Al-'Irak, where in the great struggle with Persia he became a hero of renown.

Repentant tribes received back into Islām.

After the battle of Al-Buzākha the Beni Asad, fearing lest their families should fall into the conqueror's hands, submitted and were pardoned. Other important tribes in the neighbourhood which had stood aloof watching the event, now came in and received from Khālid the same terms. They resumed the profession of Islām with all its obligations, and in proof thereof brought in the tithe. A full amnesty was accorded on but one condition, that those who during the apostasy had taken the life of any Muslim should be delivered up. These were now (to carry out the Caliph's vow) put to the like death as that which they had inflicted. If they had speared their victims, cast them over precipices, drowned them in wells, or burned them in the fire, the persecutors were now subjected to the same cruel fate.

Body of malcontents discomfited.

Khālid stayed at Al-Buzākha for a month, receiving the submission of the people and their tithes. Troops of horse scoured the country, striking terror all around. In only one direction was serious opposition met. A body of malcontents from amongst the penitent tribes, unable to brook submission, assumed a defiant attitude. They had yet to learn that the grip of Islām was stern and crushing. These gathered in a great multitude around Um Ziml, daughter of a famous chieftain of the Ghaṭafān. Her mother had been taken prisoner, and put to a cruel death by Mohammad. She herself had waited upon 'Āisha as a captive maid in the Prophet's household; but the haughty spirit of her race survived. Mounted on her mother's war-camel, she led the force herself and incited the insurgents to a bold resistance. Khālid proclaimed a great reward to him who should maim

her camel. It was soon disabled; and Um Ziml slain, the rout of the rebel host was easy. A.H. 11.

'Oyeina pardoned.

A few of the leading rebels were sent prisoners to Abu Bekr. One of them, 'Oyeina a notable marauding chieftain, had often been the terror of Medina. When the City was besieged by Koreish, he offered assistance to the Prophet on humiliating terms which were happily refused; and he was also one of the influential leaders "whose hearts," after the battle of Honein, "had been reconciled" by the Prophet's largesses. He was now led into Medīna with the rest in chains, his hands tied behind his back. The Citizens crowded round to gaze at the fallen chief, and the very children smote him with their hands, crying out, "Oh enemy of the Lord, apostate!" "Not so," said 'Oyeina bravely; "I am no apostate, and never was a believer until now." The Caliph listened patiently to the appeal of the captives. He forgave them, and commanded their release.[1]

II. *Discomfiture of the Beni Temīm. Story of Mālik ibn Nuweira*

Khālid's advance, 11 A.H. (Nov.?) 632 A.D.

Having subdued the tribes inhabiting the hills and deserts north of Medina, Khālid bent his steps eastward, against the Beni Temim who occupied the plateau towards the Persian Gulf.

Beni Temīm.

This great tribe, partly Christian and partly heathen, had from time immemorial spread its innumerable branches over the pasture-lands between Al-Yemama and the mouth of the Euphrates. With the rest of Arabia it acknowledged Mohammad and submitted to his claims. But the Prophet's death had produced amongst them the same apostasy as elsewhere. After Abu Bekr's first success some of its Chieftains, as we have seen, came to Medina with the tithes. Meanwhile a strange complication had arisen which embroiled the Beni Yerbū' (one of their clans, commanded by the famous Malik ibn Nuweira) in hostilities with the rest of the tribe, and eventually brought Khalid on the scene.

Sajāḥ, the prophetess, invades Central Arabia.

It was no less than the advent of the Prophetess Sajāḥ, at the head of a great host from Mesopotamia. Descended

[1] For Um Ziml's mother, see *Life of Mohammad*, p. 348; and for 'Oyeina, *ibid.* p. 289, etc.

A.H. 11. from the Beni Yerbu', her family had migrated north and joined the Beni Taghlib, among whom in Mesopotamia she had been brought up as a Christian. How long she had assumed the prophetic office and what were her peculiar tenets, we do not know. At the head of the Taghlib and other Christian tribes she now crossed into Arabia hoping to profit by the present confusion, and was on her way to attack Medina. Reaching the seats of Temim, she summoned to her presence the Beni Yerbu' her own clan, and promised them the kingdom should victory crown her arms. They joined her standard, with Malik ibn Nuweira at their head. The other clans of Temim refused to acknowledge the Prophetess; and so, diverted from her design upon Medina, she turned her arms against them. In a series of combats, though supported by Malik, she was worsted. Then, having made terms and exchanged prisoners, she bethought her of attacking the rival prophet Museilima, and so passed onwards to Al-Yemāma.

Mālik ibn Nuweira; As Khalid flushed with victory now approached, most of the branches of the Temim hastened to tender their submission. At this critical juncture, the withdrawal of Sajah left Malik ibn Nuweira with the Yerbu' tribe in a position of some perplexity, and he was undecided how to act. Conflicting views respecting Malik's loyalty divided the Muslim camp. For some reason Khalid was bent on attacking the Yerbu'. The men of Medina were equally opposed to the design, for which they alleged there was no authority. It had been better for Khalid to have listened. But he replied haughtily, "I am Commander, and it is for me to decide. I will march against Malik with such as choose to follow me. I compel no man." So he went forward and left the malcontents behind. These, however, thinking better of it rejoined the army. Khalid then in full force, marched straight against the headquarters of Malik, but found not a soul upon the spot. It was utterly deserted.

Brought a prisoner to Khālid. In fact, Malik had resolved on submission, though his proud spirit rebelled against presenting himself before Khalid. He knew the ordinance of Abu Bekr, that none but they who resisted and who refused the call to prayer should be molested. So he told his people that there was

no longer use in opposing this new way, but that bowing down they should suffer the wave to pass over them. "Break up your camp," he said, "and depart every man to his house." Khālid, still bent on treating the neighbourhood as enemy's land, sent forth bands everywhere to slay and plunder, and take captive all who failed to respond to the call for prayer. Amongst others, Mālik was seized with his wife and a party of his people. When challenged, they replied that they were Muslims. "Why, then, these weapons?" it was asked. So they laid aside their arms and were led as captives to the camp. As they passed by Khālid, Mālik cried aloud to him, "Thy Master never gave command for this." "*Thy* master," rejoined Khālid, "didst thou say? Then, rebel, by thine own admission, he is not thine!" A.H. 11.

Mālik ibn Nuweira put to death.

The captors differed in their evidence. Some averred that the prisoners had offered resistance. Others, with Abu Ḳatāda, a citizen of Medīna at their head, deposed that they had declared themselves Muslims, and at once complied with the call to prayer. So the party was remanded till morning under an armed guard. The night set in cold and stormy, and Khalid, with the view (so he averred) of protecting them from its inclemency, gave command "to *wrap* the prisoners." The word was ambiguous, signifying in another dialect "to *slay*"; and Ḍirār, commandant of the guard, taking it in that sense, began to put the prisoners, including Ibn Nuweira, forthwith to the sword. Khalid, hearing the uproar, hurried forth; but all was over, and he retired exclaiming, "When the Lord hath determined a thing, the same cometh verily to pass." But the fate of Mālik was not thus easily to be set at rest. The men of Medina who had opposed the advance were shocked at his cruel fate. Abu Ḳatāda roundly asserted the responsibility of Khālid. "This is thy work!" he said; and though chided, persisted in the charge, declaring that never again would he serve under Khalid's banner. In company with Mutemmam, Ibn Nuweira's brother, he set out at once for Medīna, and there laid formal complaint before the Caliph. 'Omar, with his native impetuosity, took up the cause of the Yerbu' chief. Khalid had given point to the allegations of his enemies by wedding Leila, the beautiful widow of his

A.H. 11.

His widow taken to wife by Khālid.

victim, on the spot. From this scandalous act 'Omar drew the worst conclusion. "He hath conspired to slay a believer," he said, "and hath gone in unto his wife." He was instant with Abu Bekr that the offender should be degraded and put in bonds, saying, "The sword of Khālid, dipped in violence and outrage, must be sheathed." "Nay!" replied the Caliph (of whom it is said that he never degraded any one of his Commanders); – "the Sword which the Lord hath made bare against the heathen, shall I sheathe it? That be far from me!" Nevertheless he summoned Khālid to answer the charge.

Khālid exonerated by Abu Bekr,

Khālid obeyed the call. On reaching Medina, he went straightway to the great Mosque and entered it in rough costume, his clothes rusty with the girded armour, and his turban, stuck with arrows, coiled rudely about the head. As he passed along the courtyard towards the Caliph's chamber, 'Omar met him. Unable to restrain himself, he seized the arrows from the warrior's turban, broke them over his shoulder, and abused him as hypocrite, murderer, and adulterer. Khalid, unaware whether Abu Bekr might not be of the same mind, answered not a word but passed into the Caliph's presence. There he told his story, and the explanation was accepted by Abu Bekr; but he chided him roughly for having taken to wife his victim's widow, and run counter to Arab sentiment in incontinently celebrating his nuptials on the field of battle. As Khālid, thus relieved, again passed out, he lightly rallied 'Omar in words which showed that he had been exonerated. Mutemmam then pressed his claim of blood-money for his brother's life and release of the prisoners that remained. For the release Abu Bekr gave command, but payment he declined.

But held guilty by 'Omar.

'Omar, still unconvinced of Khālid's innocence, advised that he should be withdrawn from the command. He persevered in pressing this view upon Abu Bekr, who at last replied, "'Omar, hold thy peace! Refrain thy tongue from Khālid. He gave an order, and the order was misunderstood." But 'Omar heeded not. He neither forgave nor forgot, as in the sequel we shall see.

Scandal of the case.

The scandal was the greater because Malik ibn Nuweira was a chief renowned for generosity and princely virtues, as well as for poetic talent. His brother Mutemmam, a poet

also of no mean fame, commemorated his tragic end in many touching verses which 'Omar loved to listen to, and used to say that, "had he been himself a poet, he would have had no higher ambition than to mourn in such verse the fate of his own brother Zeid," who shortly after fell at Al-Yemāma. A.H. 11.

The materials are too meagre for a conclusive judgment on the guilt or innocence of Khālid. But his scandalous marriage with the widow of Ibn Nuweira whose blood was yet fresh upon the spot, if it gave no colour to darker suspicion, justified at anyrate the indictment of shameless indulgence and reckless disregard of the proprieties of life.

III. *Battle of Al-Yemāma*

END OF 11 A.H. BEGINNING OF 633 A.D.

Khālid's campaign against Museilima. End of 11 A.H. Beginning of 633 A.D.

But sterner work was in reserve for Khālid. In the centre of Arabia, a little towards the east, lay Al-Yemāma. The Beni Ḥanīfa, a powerful branch of the great Bekr tribe, resided there. Partly Christian and partly heathen, they had submitted to Mohammad, but now were in rebellion 40,000 strong, around their Prophet Museilima. It was against these that Khālid next directed his steps.

Museilima.

The beginning of Museilima's story belongs to the life of Mohammad.[1] Small in stature, and of mean countenance, he yet had qualities which fitted him for command. He visited Medina with a deputation from his people, and it was pretended that words had then fallen from Mohammad signifying that he was destined to share with him the prophetic office. On this Museilima advanced the claim, and was accepted by his people as their prophet. Summoned from Medina to abandon these pretensions, he sent an insolent reply claiming to divide the land. Mohammad in anger drove the ambassador from his presence, and thereupon sent Ar-Rajjāl a convert of the same tribe, to counteract the heresy and reclaim his brethren; but Ar-Rajjal, like the rest, was gained over by the Pretender. Museilima, we are told, deceived the people by pretended miracles, counterfeited the language of the Kor'an, and

[1] See *Life of Mohammad*, p. 477.

A.H. 11. instituted prayers like those of Mohammad. In short, his religion was but a wretched travesty of Islam. Though strongly supported by his own people both as their Prophet and their Ruler, he now felt that the meshes of Abu Bekr began to close round him. The Caliph's Generals were steadily reclaiming the coast of the Persian Gulf, and Khalid whom he dreaded most was not far behind. At this juncture came tidings that the Prophetess Sajah, worsted as we have seen by the Beni Temim, was coming with troops against him. In his perplexity he sent her a friendly invitation. She came, and their sentiments were so much alike that the Prophet of Al-Yemama took the Prophetess of Mesopotamia to wife, and celebrated their nuptials on the spot—the dower to be one-half the revenues of Al-Yemama. After a few days, Sajah departed for her northern home and, like a meteor, vanished, just as she had startled Arabia by her advent. Parties of Mesopotamian horse still ranged over the land collecting her dues when Khalid's approach at once changed the scene; and Museilima marching out with a heavy force to meet him, pitched his camp at 'Akrabā.

His marriage with Sajah, the Prophetess.

'Ikrima and Shurahbil's reverse.

'Ikrima and Shurahbil, sent by Abu Bekr to quell the rising at Al-Yemama, had already suffered badly at the hands of Museilima from a hasty and ill-advised advance. The reverse was so serious that Abu Bekr wrote angrily to 'Ikrima—"I will not see thy face, nor shalt thou see mine, as now thou art. Thou shalt not return hither to dishearten the people. Depart unto the uttermost coasts, and there join the armies in the east and south." So, skirting Al-Yemama, 'Ikrima went forward to 'Oman, there to retrieve his tarnished reputation. Shurahbil, meanwhile, was directed to halt and await the approach of Khalid.

Khalid sets out for Yemama.

It was upon this reverse that Khalid, when summoned to Medina about the affair of Malik, received his commission to attack Museilima. In anticipation of severe fighting the Caliph sent with him a fresh column of veterans from amongst the men of Mecca and Medina. Thus reinforced Khalid returned to his camp at Al-Bitah, and advanced in strength to meet the enemy.

Majā'a taken prisoner.

While yet a march from 'Akrabā, Khalid surprised a mounted body of the Beni Hanifa under command of their

chief Majā'a. They were returning from a raid against a neighbouring tribe, unaware of his approach. But as they belonged to the enemy, they were all put to the sword excepting Majā'a, whom Khālid spared in hope of his being useful on the morrow, and kept chained in his tent under charge of Leila his lately espoused wife. A.H. 11.

Next day the armies met upon the sandy plain of 'Aḳrabā. The enemy rushed on with desperate bravery. "Fight for your loved ones!" they cried,—"it is the day of jealousy and vengeance; if ye be worsted, your maidens will be ravished and your wives dragged to their foul embrace!" So fierce was the shock that the Muslims were driven back and their camp uncovered. The wild Bedawīn entered the tent of Khālid, and, but for the chivalry of her captive, who conjured his countrymen to spare a lady of noble birth, Leila would have perished by their swords. "Go, fight against men," Majā'a cried, "and leave this woman," on which they cut the tent-ropes and departed. There was danger for Islām at the moment. Defeat would have been disastrous; indeed, the Faith could hardly have survived. But now the spirit of the Muslims was aroused. To stimulate rivalry between the Bedawīn and City Arabs of his force, Khālid made them to fight apart. On this they rallied one the other,—"Now," cried the sons of the desert, "we shall see carnage wax hot amongst the raw levies of the town. We shall teach them how to fight!" Prodigies of valour were fought all round. Tradition dwells with enthusiasm on the heroic words and deeds of the leaders, as one after another they fell in the thick of battle. Zeid, brother of 'Omar, leading the men of Mecca, singled out Ar-Rajjāl and, reproaching his apostasy, despatched him forthwith. A furious south wind charged with desert sand, blinded the Muslims and caused a momentary check. Upbraiding their slackness, Zeid cried out,—"Onwards to those that have gone before! Not a word will I speak till we drive these apostates back, or I appear to clear me before my Lord. Close your eyes and clench your teeth. Forward like men!" So saying, he led the charge and fell. Abu Ḥodheifa, with leaves of the scripture stuck on the spear shaft which he bore, and calling out, "Fight for the Ḳor'ān, ye Muslims, and adorn it by your deeds!" followed Battle of Yemāma.

A.H. 11. his example and shared the common fate. His freedman seized the banner as it fell, and exclaiming "I were a craven bearer of the sacred text if I feared death," plunged with it into the battle and was slain. Nor were the men of Medina far behind. Their Commander as they gave way reproached them thus,—"Woe to you because of this backsliding. Verily, I am clear of ye, even as I am clear of these," pointing to the apostate enemy: and so he flung himself among them and perished in their midst. Animated thus, the rank and file charged furiously. Backwards and forwards swayed the line, and heavy was the carnage. But urged by Khalid's valiant arm, and raising the battle-cry "*Ya Mohammada!*" the Muslim arms at length prevailed. The enemy broke and fled. "To the garden!" cried Al-Muhakkam, a brave leader of the Beni Hanifa; "to the garden, and close the gate!" Taking his stand, he guarded their retreat as they rushed into an orchard surrounded by a strong wall, and Museilima with them. The Muslim troops following close, swarmed round the wall but found the entrance barred. At last Al-Bara ibn Malik cried, "Lift me aloft upon the wall." So they lifted him up. For a moment, as he looked on the surging mass below, the hero hesitated; then, boldly leaping down, he beat right and left, until he reached the gate, and threw it open. Like waters pent up, his comrades rushed in; and, as beasts of the forest snared in a trap, so wildly struggled the brave Beni Hanifa in the *Garden of Death*. Hemmed within the narrow space, hampered by the trees, arms useless from their very numbers, they were hewn down and perished to a man. The carnage was fearful, for besides the "thousands" (as tradition puts it) slain within the walls, an equal number were killed on the field, and again an equal number in the flight. The Muslims too, despite their splendid victory, had cause to remember the "Garden of Death," for their loss was beyond all previous experience. Besides those killed hand to hand in the garden, great numbers fell in the battle. The Refugees lost 360 men, and the Men of Medina 300, nearly 700 in all; while the slaughter amongst the Bedawin, though somewhat less, raised the loss beyond 1200, besides the wounded. Amongst the dead were nine-and-thirty chief Companions of the Prophet. At Medina

Enemy discomfited.

The Garden of Death.

Terrible slaughter on both sides.

A.H. 11.

there was hardly a house, whether of Refugees or Citizens, in which the voice of wailing was not heard.

Museilima among the slain.

Museilima was slain by Waḥshi, the same negro warrior who, swinging round his head a javelin after the savage Ethiopian style, had on the field of Oḥod brought Ḥamza to the ground. After the battle, Khālid carried the chief Majā'a, still in chains, over the field to identify the dead. Turning the bodies over, they came upon a stalwart figure. "Look, was this your Master?" said Khālid. "Nay," replied Maja'a, "that was a nobler and a better man";—it was the brave Muḥakkam who, covering the retreat, was slain by the Caliph's son. Entering the "Garden of Death," among the heaps of mangled dead they stumbled on one of insignificant mien. "This is your man," Majā'a said, as he turned the body of Museilima on its side;—"truly ye have done for him!" "Yea," replied Khālid, "or rather it is he that hath done for you all that which he hath done."

Truce with the Beni Ḥanīfa.

The Muslim horse now scoured the country and every day brought in bands of prisoners. Aware that after their crushing defeat the Beni Ḥanīfa were incapable of resistance, their chief Majā'a bethought him of a stratagem. He represented that the forts and fastnesses were still held in force throughout the country; in proof of which he sent to tell the aged men, the women,—all that were left behind, and even the children,—to line their battlements in warrior's disguise. Persuaded thus that the inhabitants would fight to the last, and seeing the army wearied and anxious for their homes, Khālid concluded a truce more favourable than he would otherwise have given. When Majā'a's artifice came to light, Khālid was angry; but excusing him on the ground of patriotism, in the end stood by the treaty. No sooner was it concluded than he received a despatch of unwonted severity from Abu Bekr, who, to strike terror into other apostate tribes, commanded that not a single fighting man of the rebel and ungodly race be spared. Fortunately this the truce forbade; the Beni Ḥanīfa were received back into Islām, and a portion only of the multitude were retained as prisoners. The campaign ended, Khālid sent a deputation of the tribe to Abu Bekr, who received them courteously. "Out upon you!" at first he said; "how is it that this impostor has led you all astray?" "Oh Caliph!" they

A.H. 11. answered, "thou hast heard it all; he was one whom the Lord blessed not, nor yet his people"; and they repeated to him some of the things he used to say. "Good heavens!" exclaimed Abu Bekr; "what kind of words are these? There is neither sense in them for good nor yet for evil, but a strange fatuity to have beguiled you thus." So he dismissed them to their homes.

Many Companions slain.

Among the slain are not a few names familiar to the student of the Prophet's life. The carnage amongst the "*Readers*" (those who had the Kor'an by heart) was so great as to give 'Omar the first idea of collecting the Sacred Text, "lest any part of it should be lost." At the death of his brother Zeid who had shared with him all the dangers of the early battles of Islām, 'Omar was inconsolable. "Thou art returned home," he said to his son 'Abdallah, "safe and sound; and Zeid is dead. Wherefore wast not thou slain before him? I wish not to see thy face." "Father," was his reply, "he asked for martyrdom, and the Lord granted it. I strove after the same, but it was not given unto me." Such was the spirit of these Muslim warriors.

Khālid takes Maja'a's daughter to wife.

Khālid again signalised his victory by wedding a captive maid upon the field. "Give me thy daughter to wife," he said to Maja'a, the same who had so faithfully defended his bride in the hour of peril. "Wait," replied Maja'a; "be not so hasty; thou wilt harm thyself in the Caliph's eyes, and me likewise." "Man, give me thy daughter!" he repeated imperiously; so Maja'a gave her to him. When Abu Bekr heard of it, he wrote him a letter sprinkled with blood. "By my life! thou son of Khalid's father, thou art a pretty fellow, living thus at thine ease. Thou weddest a damsel, whilst the ground beneath the nuptial couch is yet moistened with the blood of twelve hundred!" The reproof fell lightly upon Khālid. "This is the work," he said as he read the epistle, "of that left-handed fellow," meaning 'Omar. The sentiment, however, was Abu Bekr's own; but the "Sword of the Lord" could not be spared.

We shall meet Khalid next in Chaldæa, by the banks of the Euphrates.

CHAPTER VI

APOSTASY AND REBELLION CRUSHED IN OTHER PARTS OF THE PENINSULA

11 A.H. 632-633 A.D.

Campaign in East and South of Arabia, 11 A.H. 632-3 A.D.

WHILE Khalid thus pursued his victorious career from the North to the Centre of Arabia, the various columns despatched by Abu Bekr were engaged with the apostate and rebellious tribes in other parts of the Peninsula. The opposition there was not less stubborn; and the success, though in many quarters slow and even at times doubtful, was in the end complete.

Bahrein taken by 'Alā.

Beyond Al-Yemama, and skirting the Persian Gulf between Al-Ḳatīf and 'Omān, lie the two desert provinces of Hejer and Al-Bahrein. Al-Mundhir, their Christian chief, had adopted Islam, and recognising the suzerainty of the Prophet had received Al-'Ala as Resident at his Court. But Al-Mundhir died shortly after Mohammad, and the Province went into rebellion. Al-'Ala fled, but was sent back with a strong force to reclaim the apostate people. The brilliant campaign of Khalid had just then struck terror into the neighbouring country; and so, as he passed near the borders of Al-Yemama, Al-'Ala was joined by contingents from many chiefs anxious thus to prove their loyalty. A scion of the Ḥira dynasty hostile to Islam had succeeded Al-Mundhir, and Al-'Ala found him so well supported that, even thus strengthened, he had to entrench his army and content himself with single combats and indecisive skirmishes. At last, finding through his spies that the enemy were in a festive and drunken state, he overwhelmed them unexpectedly and took their Prince a prisoner. The discomfited host fled by ship to Darin, an island near the coast, whither they were

A.H. 11. again pursued and put utterly to the sword. The spoil was prodigious, and so was the multitude of women and children taken captive.

Miraculous lake; and drying up of the sea. On the Prophet's death tradition ceases to indulge in the miraculous; but this expedition forms a singular exception. As the column marching from Medina reached the waterless zone of Dahna, it had nearly perished by long-protracted thirst; when in the last extremity, water suddenly shining in the horizon man and beast hurried joyfully on to slake their thirst at an extensive lake. No spring had been ever seen in that wilderness before; nor was the miraculous lake ever found again. Shortly after, while pursuing the apostate host to the isle of Darin, a second miracle parted the waves, and the Muslims after a wild invocation of the Deity, rushed on and crossed the strait, as it had been a shallow beach. A pious bard has likened the passage to that of the Israelites through the Red Sea, and a monk is said to have been converted by the double miracle of waters breaking out in the wilderness, and waters drying up in the channel of the great deep.

Muthanna. While thus engaged, Al-'Alā received material help from loyal followers along the coast. Amongst those who aided in this work was Al-Muthanna, a chief of great influence amongst the Bekr clans; following up the victory of Al-'Ala along the Persian Gulf, this warrior in his progress from Hejer northwards, reached at last the delta of the Euphrates, where he inaugurated a fresh movement that will shortly engage attention.

'Omān. The reduction of the important province of 'Omān followed close on that of Al-Bahrein. Its Prince had recently tendered allegiance to Mohammad. 'Amr was thereupon deputed as Resident, and the tithes were, by reason of the distance, given up to the local poor. Notwithstanding this concession, Mohammad was no sooner dead than the people, led by a rebel who claimed to be a prophet, rebelled. The Prince fled to the mountains, and 'Amr to Medina. The task of reclaiming 'Omān and the adjoining province of Mahra was committed by Abu Bekr to Hodheifa, a convert of influence in those parts. He was assisted by 'Ikrima, sent, as we have seen by Abu Bekr, to retrieve his reputation in this distant quarter. Arrived in 'Omān, they

effected a junction with the loyal Prince. An engagement followed, in which the Muslims, hard pressed, were near to suffering defeat, when a strong column from the tribes recently reclaimed in Al-Bahrein appeared on the field and turned the battle in their favour. The slaughter amongst the enemy was great, and the women placed in the rear to nerve their courage, fell a welcome prize into the believers' hands. The mart of Dabā, enriched by Indian merchandise, yielded a magnificent booty, and there was at once despatched to Medina the royal fifth of slaves and plunder. A.H. 11. Battle of Dabā.

Hodheifa was left behind as governor of 'Omān. 'Ikrima, having thus reached the easternmost point of Arabia, turned to the south-west; and with an army daily swelled by levies from repentant tribes, pursued his victorious course to Mahra. This province was at the moment distracted by a breach between two rival chiefs. Espousing the cause of the weaker, who at once avowed the Faith, 'Ikrima attacked the other and achieved a great victory. Among the spoil were 2000 Bactrian camels and a vast supply of arms and beasts of burden. This quarter of the Peninsula quickly subdued and restored to order, 'Ikrima, now in great strength, advanced as he had been instructed, to join Al-Muhajir in the campaign against Hadramaut and the Yemen. But we must first take note of how things stood after the death of Mohammad nearer home, in the west and south of the Peninsula. Mahra.

While the towns of Mecca and At-Taif remained tolerably secure, the country round about was rife with violence and misrule. Hordes from the lawless tribes, ready as ever for plunder and rapine, hovered close even to the Holy City. They were attacked by the Governor, and dispersed with slaughter. Order was restored by a body of 500 men quartered within the sacred limits, and by pickets throughout the neighbourhood. But from thence all the way to the Yemen, nothing was to be seen save turmoil and alarm. Troops of bandits, remnants of the false prophet's army, ravaged Nejrān; and the loyal adherents of Islam were fain to fly to mountain fastnesses. The Tihama, or long strip of land skirting the shore of the Red Sea, was overrun by bands of Bedawin robbers, stopping all communication between the north and south. An army at length cleared the country of these robbers,—so effectually indeed, that the The Hijāz and Tihama.

A.H. 11. roads became again for a time impassable, but now only from the offensive mass of carcases strewn upon them.

Yemen after Aswad's death.

Peace in the Yemen was not so easily restored. The "Veiled Prophet" Aswad had been recently assassinated by conspirators in the interest of Mohammad.[1] These were Keis ibn Mekshuh an Arab chief, and two others of Persian descent, Feiruz and Daduweihi, into whose hands the government of Ṣan'a fell. The tidings reaching Medina just after Mohammad's death, Abu Bekr appointed Feiruz to be his lieutenant. The Arab blood of Keis ibn Mekshuh rebelled against serving under a Persian, and he plotted to expel the whole body of foreign immigrants. To effect this, he called in the aid of 'Amr ibn Ma'dikerib, a famous poet and influential chief who, having like others cast off the Faith, ravaged the country with remnants of the false prophet's army. Daduweihi was treacherously slain by this 'Amr at a feast, but Feiruz escaped, and after much hardship secured his retreat with a friendly tribe. For a time Keis ibn Mekshuh carried all before him. The family of Feiruz was taken captive, and the Persian settlers, pursued in every direction, fled to the mountains, or took ship from Aden. Feiruz appealed to Medina; but it was long before the Caliph had any men to send. So Feirûz cast about for himself, and at length, by the aid of loyal tribes, put the troops of Keis ibn Mekshuh to flight, regained possession of his family and reoccupied Ṣan'ā.

Keis ibn Mekshuh and 'Amr defeated.

The Yemen restored. End of 11 A.H. Spring. 633 A.D.

But more effectual help was now approaching. On one side was Al-Muhajir. Appointed by the Prophet his lieutenant in Hadramaut, he had been detained by sickness at Medina, perhaps also by inability earlier to obtain a following. Last of the Commanders to take the field, it was probably ten or twelve months after the Prophet's death before he marched south, and, joined on the way by loyal tribes, approached the disturbed country at the head of a substantial force. On the other hand, 'Ikrima, with an ever-growing army, advanced from the east. Hastening to meet Al-Muhajir he, for the present, left Hadramaut aside and passed rapidly on towards Aden. Alarmed at the gathering storm, Keis and 'Amr joined their forces to oppose Al-Muhajir. But soon quarrelling, they parted, sending each

[1] *Life of Mohammad*, p. 479.

other, after Arab wont, lampoons in bitter verse. Opposition being now vain, 'Amr sought by an unworthy stratagem to gain his safety. Making a night attack on Ḳeis, he carried him prisoner to Al-Muhājir; but he had forgotten a safe-conduct for himself. Al-Muhājir, therefore, seized both, and sent them in chains to Medina. The Caliph was at first minded to put 'Amr to death because of the murder of Dāduweihi, but he denied the crime, and there was no evidence to prove it. "Art thou not ashamed," said Abu Bekr to him, "that following the rebel cause, thou art ever either a fugitive or in bonds? Hadst thou been a defender of the Faith instead, then had the Lord raised thee above thy fellows." "So assuredly it is," replied the humbled chief; "I will embrace the faith, and never again desert it." The Caliph forgave them; and his clemency was not abused, for we find both these gallant and unscrupulous chiefs soon after fighting loyally in the Persian war. After this, the Yemen was speedily reduced to order, and Al-Muhājir was at liberty to pursue his march to Ḥaḍramaut. A.H. 11.

The government of the great southern province of Ḥaḍramaut was held with difficulty during the protracted absence of Al-Muhajir by one Ziyād, who aroused the hatred of its occupants the Beni Kinda, by exacting from them the tithe; but with the support of some still loyal clans he was able to hold his place. In one of his raids Ziyād having carried off the families of a vanquished tribe, Al-Ash'ath ibn Ḳeis, chief of the Beni Kinda, was moved by their cries; and, having gathered a strong force, fell upon Ziyad and rescued the captives. It is the same Al-Ash'ath who, when he tendered homage to Mohammad, betrothed to himself the sister of Abu Bekr.[1] Now compromised, he went into active rebellion, and roused the whole country against Ziyād who, surrounded by the enemy, despatched an urgent summons for Al-Muhajir to hasten to his deliverance. Ḥaḍramaut. Ash'ath ibn Ḳeis

By this time Al-Muhājir and 'Ikrima, marching respectively from Ṣan'ā and Aden, had effected a junction at Ma'rib, and were crossing the sandy desert which lay between them and Ḥaḍramaut. Receiving the message, Al-Muhajir set off in haste with a flying squadron and, joined by Ziyad, fell upon Al-Ash'ath and discomfited him with great slaughter. subdued by Muhājir and 'Ikrima.

[1] *Life of Mohammad*, p. 463.

A.H. 11. The routed enemy fled for refuge to a stronghold, which Al-Muhājir immediately invested. 'Ikrima soon came up with the main body, and there were now troops enough both to besiege the city and ravage the country around. Stung at witnessing the ruin of their kindred, and preferring death to dishonour, the garrison sallied forth and fought the Muslims in the plain. After a desperate struggle, in which the approaches were filled with bodies of the dead, they were driven back. Meanwhile, Abu Bekr, apprised of their obstinate resistance, sent orders to make an example of the rebels and give no quarter. The wretched garrison, with the enemy daily increasing and no prospect of relief, were now bereft of hope. Seeing the position desperate, the wily Al-Ash'ath made his way to 'Ikrima, and treacherously agreed to deliver up the fortress if nine lives were guaranteed. The Muslims entered, slew the fighting men, and took the women captive. When Al-Ash'ath presented the list of nine to be spared—"Thy name is not here!" cried Al-Muhājir, exultingly; for the craven traitor had forgotten in the excitement of the moment to enter his own name;—"The Lord be praised, who hath condemned thee out of thine own mouth." So, having cast him into chains, he was about to order his execution when 'Ikrima interposed and induced him, much against his will, to refer the case to Abu Bekr. The crowd of captive women, mourning the massacre of their sons and husbands, loaded the recreant as he passed by with bitter imprecation.

Ash'ath spared by Abu Bekr.

Arrived at Medina, the Caliph abused him as a pusillanimous wretch who had neither the power to lead, nor yet the courage to defend, his people, and threatened him with death. But at last, moved by his appeal to the terms agreed upon by 'Ikrima, and by protestation that he would thenceforth fight bravely for the Faith, Abu Bekr not only forgave him but allowed him to fulfil the marriage contract with his sister. Al-Ash'ath remained for a while in idleness at Medina, and the Caliph would say that one of the few things he repented of, was having weakly spared the rebel's life. But afterwards Al-Ash'ath went forth to the wars, and as we shall see, effectually redeemed his name.

Peace universally restored.

Thus, in this the last province of the Peninsula, rebellion was finally crushed and the reign of Islām completely re-

established. Al-Muhājir elected to remain in the Yemen, where he shared the government with Feirūz. Ziyād continued to administer Ḥaḍramaut. A.H. 11.

A curious story is told of a lady whom 'Ikrima married at Aden, and carried with him in his camp. She had been betrothed to Moḥammad, but the marriage had not been completed. The soldiers murmured, and questioned the propriety of 'Ikrima's marriage. Al-Muhājir referred the matter to Abu Bekr, who decided that there was nothing wrong in the proceeding, as Moḥammad had never fulfilled his contract with the damsel.[1] Lady who had been betrothed to Moḥammad.

I should not here omit to mention the fate of two songstresses in the Yemen, who were accused, one of satirising the Prophet, the other of ridiculing the Muslims, in their songs. Al-Muhājir had the hands of both cut off, and also (to stay their singing for the future) their front teeth pulled out. The Caliph, on hearing of it, approved the punishment of the first; for, said he, "Crime against the Prophet is not as crime against a common man; and, indeed, had the case been first referred to me, I should, as a warning to others, have directed her execution." But he disapproved the mutilation of the other. Two songstresses mutilated.

As a rule Abu Bekr was mild in his judgments, and even generous to a fallen and submissive foe. But there were, as we have seen, exceptions. On one occasion the treachery of a rebel chief irritated him to an act of barbarous cruelty. Al-Fujā'a, a leader of some note, under pretence of fighting against the insurgents in his neighbourhood, obtained from the Caliph arms and accoutrements for his band. Thus equipped, he abused the trust, and becoming a freebooter, attacked and plundered alike Muslim and apostate. Abu Bekr thereupon wrote letters to a loyal chief in that quarter to go against the brigand. Hard pressed, Al-Fujā'a challenged his adversary to a parley, and asserted that he held a commission as good as his. "If thou speakest true," answered the other, "lay aside thy weapons and accompany me to Abu Bekr." He did so, but no sooner did he appear at Medina, than the Caliph, enraged at his treachery, cried aloud: "Go forth with this traitor to the A freebooter burned to death.

[1] *Life of Moḥammad*, p. 390. She was brought to the Prophet for her beauty, who finding some blemish, sent her home. Ṭab. i. 2012 f.

A.H. 11. burial-ground, and there burn him with fire." So, hard by the graveyard of the City they gathered wood, and heaping it together at the place of prayer, kindled the pile and cast Al-Fuja'a on it. If the charges were well founded, which we have no ground for doubting, Al-Fuja'a deserved the fate of a bandit; but to cast him alive into the flames was a savage act, for which Abu Bekr was sorry afterwards, and used to say—"It is one of the three things which I would I had not done."

CHAPTER VII

REVIEW. SULLENNESS OF RECLAIMED TRIBES. CAMPAIGNS IN SYRIA AND CHALDÆA. DESPATCH OF TROOPS REKINDLES ENTHUSIASM. DOMESTIC EVENTS.

11 A.H. 632 A.D.

Review. Reign of Islām re-established in Arabia.

THUS, within a year of the death of the Prophet, the sway of Islām, which for a time had clean gone, was re-established throughout the Peninsula. The circle of victory was now complete. Begun, with the avenging expedition of Usāma in the north, it was followed up by Khālid's brilliant achievements in the east and centre of Arabia. But while in the "Garden of Death" the flower of the faithful were deciding the fate of Islam, then trembling in the balance, operations for a season languished elsewhere. Eventually, the campaign was carried vigorously over the other provinces, though in some quarters with limited resource and varying fortune; till, in the end, 'Ikrima sweeping down the eastern coast, and joined by Al-Muhājir in the south, stamped out as we have seen the last embers of apostasy.

The Arabs sullen, till roused by war-cry from without.

The rebellion was suppressed, but the Arab tribes remained sullen and averse. The Bedawi, wont to wander wild and free over his pathless deserts, chafed at the demand of tithe, and spurned obedience to Medina. Simply force and fear as yet attached him to the Caliph. The question occurs, what would have been the fortune of Islam had no great impulse arisen from without? The prospect was not encouraging. Convictions so shallow, and aspirations so low, as those of the Bedawin would soon have disappeared; force and fear would not long have availed to hold together such disintegrated materials as go to form the Arab nation. The South was jealous of the North; Bedawin of the desert

A.H. 11. scorned the settled population; each tribe had cause of rivalry with its neighbour, and feuds were ever arising out of the law of blood. Now as well as later on there was also the mutual jealousy of the two cities of Mecca with its southern Arab population, and Medina with its northern. Even in Medina, cradle of the Faith, the Aus were impatient of the Khazraj and both were jealous of the Ansār. The only authority recognised by a Bedawi is that of his tribal chief, and even that sits lightly. To him freedom is life; and dependence on a central power most hateful. If nothing external had supervened, he would soon have shaken off the yoke of Islām, and Arabia would have returned to its primeval state. But fortunately for Islām, a new idea electrified the nation. No sooner was apostasy put down than, first in Chaldæa and then in Syria, collision with wild border tribes kindled the fire of foreign war; and forthwith the whole Arabian people, both town and Bedawi, were riveted to Islam by a common bond—the love of rapine and the lust of spoil.

Islām intended for Arabia;

That the heritage of Islām is the world, was an afterthought. The idea, spite of much proleptic tradition, had been conceived but dimly, if at all, by Mohammad himself. His world was Arabia, and for it the new Dispensation was ordained. The Revelation ran in "simple Arabic" for the teaching of its people.[1] From first to last the summons was to Arabs and to them alone. It is true that some years before his death, Mohammad sent embassies to the Kings and Princes around him, calling on them to confess the faith of Islam; but the step was not in any way followed up. Nor was it otherwise with the command to fight against Jews, Christians, and Idolaters; that command as announced to the Arab tribes assembled at the Farewell pilgrimage,[2] had reference to Arabia alone, and had no immediate bearing on warfare beyond its bounds. The Prophet's dying legacy was to the same effect:—"See," said he, "that there be but this one Faith throughout Arabia." The seed of a universal creed had indeed been sown; but that it ever germinated was due to circumstance rather than design. Even 'Omar after splendid conquest everywhere, dreaded lest his armies should proceed too far, and be cut off

[1] Kor'ān, XLII 5; *et passim*. [2] *Life*, p. 468 ff.

from succour. Therefore he set barriers (as we shall see) to the ambition of his arms beyond which they should not pass. A.H. 11.

Still, though nowhere in the Ḳor'ān distinctly commanded, universal empire was altogether in accord with the spirit of the Faith. "When a people leaveth off to fight in the ways of the Lord," said Abu Bekr in his inaugural address (and so saying struck the keynote of militant Islām) "the Lord casteth off that people." Thus, when the Rubicon once was crossed, the horizon enlarged in ever-widening circles till it embraced the World. It was the scent of war that now turned the sullen temper of the Arab tribes into eager loyalty: for thus the brigand spirit of the Bedawi was brought into unison with the new-born fire of Islām. The call to battle reverberated throughout the land, and was answered eagerly. The exodus began with the tribes in the north, those first reclaimed from their apostasy. Later, in the second year of the Caliphate, the war-cry spread to the south, and grew in magnitude year by year. At first the Caliph forbade that help should be received from any that had backslidden, the privilege being reserved for such only as had remained steadfast in the Faith. But, step by step, as new spheres opened out, and appeal ran from shore to shore for fresh levies to fill the "Martyr" gaps, the ban was put aside and all were bidden. Warrior after warrior, column after column, whole tribes in endless succession with their women and children, issued forth to fight. And ever, at the marvellous tale of cities conquered; of rapine rich beyond compute; of maidens parted on the very field of battle "to every man a damsel or two"; and at the sight of the royal fifth set forth in splendour as it reached Medina; —fresh tribes arose and went. Onward and still onward, like swarms from the hive, or flights of locusts darkening the land, tribe after tribe issued forth and hastening northward, spread in great masses to the East and to the West.

spread at the call to conquer.

Teeming hosts go forth.

It must not, however, be overlooked that though apostasy was thus condoned, and in the blaze of victory almost lost sight of, a certain discredit still clung to the repentant backslider. His guilt was not like that of other men who had sinned before conversion. The apostate, once enlightened, had cast by his fall a deliberate slur upon Islam. Therefore

Discredit still attaching to apostasy.

A.H. 11. no leader who had joined the great Apostasy was ever promoted to a chief command. He might fight, and welcome, in the ranks; was allowed even to head small parties of fifty or a hundred; but to the last, high post of honour was denied.

Arabs the nobility of the Muslim world.

The Arabs, thus emerging from their desert-home, became the aristocracy of Islam. Conquered nations, even of much higher civilisation, when they embraced the Faith fell into an altogether lower caste. Arabians were the dominant class, and they alone wheresoever they might go. It was only as "Clients," or dependants, that the people of other lands might share their privileges,—crumbs, as it were, from off the master's table. Yet great numbers of the Arabs themselves were at this early period slaves, captured during the Apostasy or in previous intertribal war, and held in bondage by their fellow-countrymen. 'Omar saw the inconsistency. It was not fit that any of the noble race should remain in slavery. Therefore, when succeeding to the Caliphate, he decreed their freedom. "The Lord," he said, "hath given to us of Arab blood the victory and great conquests from without. It is not meet that any one of us, taken captive in the days of Ignorance or in the recent wars, should be holden in captivity." Slaves of Arab descent were therefore all allowed their liberty on payment of a slender ransom, excepting only bondmaids who, having borne children to their owners, already held, as such, a place of privilege. Men that had lost their wives or children, now set out in search, if haply they might find and reclaim them. Strange tales are told of these disconsolate journeys. But some of the women captive at Medina preferred remaining with their masters.

Slaves of Arab blood set free.

This ascendency, social, military, and political, the Arab nation maintained for upwards of two centuries. Then they were gradually supplanted (as we shall see) throughout the East by Turks and Persians. Such as had settled in cities mingled with the people; the rest returned to their desert wilds, and with them departed the glory of the Caliphate. This, however, was not the case in the West; and so in Spain and Africa the prestige of Arab blood survived.

Medīna.

The domestic history of Medina is at this early period

A.H. 11.

barren of incident. As Judge in civil causes, the Caliph nominated 'Omar; but warlike operations, first in the Peninsula and then in foreign lands, so occupied men's minds, that for the time the office was a sinecure.

Pilgrimage.

The Presidency at the Mecca Pilgrimage is carefully recorded yearly by the annalists of Islām. The Caliph was now too much engrossed with the commotion throughout Arabia to proceed thither himself, and so the Governor of the Holy City presided in his stead.

Thus ended the first year of the Caliphate.

CHAPTER VIII

CAMPAIGN IN CHALDÆA

12 A.H. 633 A.D.

Collision with border tribes led to conflict with Greek and Persian empires.

CHALDÆA and southern Syria belong properly to Arabia. The tribes inhabiting this region, partly heathen but chiefly (at least in name) Christian, formed an integral part of the Arab race and as such fell within the immediate scope of the new Dispensation. When, however, these came into collision with the Muslim columns on the frontier, they were supported by their respective sovereigns,—the western by the Kaiser, and the eastern by the Chosroes. Thus the struggle widened, and Islam was brought presently face to face in mortal conflict with the two great Powers of the East and of the West.

History dependent on Arabian sources.

It is important, especially in the early part of this history, for the student to bear in mind that Arabian sources are practically all he has to guide him here. Byzantine annals disappear in the impending cataclysm; and it is many long years before any considerable help is available from western chronicles. The Persian Empire again was altogether swallowed up in the invasion of the Arabs, and consequently it is from the conquerors alone that we learn the events about to be told regarding it. Thus, both for East and West, we are almost entirely dependent on Arabian tradition, which itself at the first is but brief and fragmentary; and moreover, being entirely one-sided, we are left as best we can to draw a narrative just and impartial to all concerned.

Position of Greek and Persian empires.

In neither of the great Powers which Abu Bekr was about to try conclusions with, had the nerve and virtue of earlier days survived. Luxury, corruption and oppression,

religious strife and military disaster, had impaired their vigour and undermined their strength. Barbarous hordes overrunning the Western Empire, had wrested the farther provinces from Byzantine rule. Between the Kaiser and the Chosroes again, war had long prevailed, Syria and Mesopotamia, scenes of the coming warfare, being the prize, now of one, now of the other. By the last turn of fortune, Heraclius, marching from the Black Sea, had routed the Persians on the field of Nineveh, and advanced triumphantly to the very gates of the enemy's capital. Siroes, after putting to death his father and eighteen brothers, enjoyed but a few months the fruits of his parricidal crime; and (as we are told by Gibbon) "in the space of four years, the royal title was assumed by nine candidates, who disputed, with the sword or dagger, the fragments of an exhausted monarchy." Such was the condition of Persia, its Court imbecile and anarchy rampant, at the time when Abu Bekr was engaged in his struggle with the apostate tribes. Nevertheless, the Arabian armies met with a fiercer and more protracted opposition on the Persian than on the Syrian side. And the reason is that Islām aimed its blow at the very heart of Persia. Constantinople might remain, with Syria gone, ignobly safe. But if the Arabs gained Al-'Irak, Ctesiphon (Al-Medain) close at hand, must fall, and Persia with it. To this quarter attention will be now directed.

A.H. 12.

6 A.H. 627 A.D.

Among the chiefs who helped to reclaim Al-Bahrein, Al-Muthanna has been already named. Advancing along the Persian Gulf, he reduced Al-Katif, and carried his victorious arms into the delta of the Euphrates. "Who is this Al-Muthanna?" asked Abu Bekr, as tidings of success kept reaching Medina, "and to what clan does he belong?" Learning that he was of the great Bekr tribe which peopled that vicinity, he commanded him to "march forward fighting in the ways of the Lord." The service was such as Bedawin love; and his column was soon swelled to 8000 men. But opposition gathered in front. The Christian and heathen tribes were roused; and Abu Bekr, anticipating the impending struggle, resolved that "the Sword of the Lord" should be again unsheathed, and so Khālid was deputed to subdue Chaldæa.

Muthanna attacks Chaldæa.

A.H. 12.

Troops sent to 'Irāḳ. i. 12 A.H. March 633 A.D.

By the beginning of the twelfth year of the Hijra rebellion had been put down throughout Arabia, excepting the south, which was also in fair way of pacification. It became now Abu Bekr's policy to turn his restless Arab columns to similar work elsewhere. He despatched two armies to the north. One, under command of Khālid joined by Al-Muthanna, was to march on Ubulla, an ancient city near the mouth of the Euphrates, and from thence, driving the enemy up the western bank, to work its way towards Al-Hira the capital of Chaldæa. 'Iyad, at the head of the other, was directed to Duma (midway between the head of the Red Sea and Persian Gulf) which had cast off its allegiance, and thence to pass also on to Al-Hira. Whichever first reached that city was to be in command of the country.[1]

Khālid joins Muthanna in 'Irāḳ.

'Iyad, hampered by his enemy, was long detained in the neighbourhood of Duma. Khālid, meeting no such obstacle, was joined on his march from Al-Yemāma to Al-Irāḳ by large bodies of Bedawin. These were of the greater service, as his numbers had been thinned, not only by the carnage at Al-Yemama, but also by the free permission given the army, after that arduous campaign, to proceed on furlough to their homes. Nevertheless, the expedition was so popular that when, after a flying visit to the Caliph, Khālid rejoined his camp by the Euphrates, he found himself at the head of 10,000 men; and this besides the 8000 of Al-Muthanna, who hastened loyally to place himself under the great leader's command.

Mesopotamia and the Syrian desert.

The country before them was in some of its features familiar to the invading army, in others new and strange. From the head of the Persian Gulf across to the Dead Sea stretches a stony desert, trackless and bereft of water. Advancing north, Nature relaxes; the plain, still a wilderness, is in season clothed with verdure, bright with flowers, instinct with the song of birds and hum of winged life. Such is the pasture-land which for hundreds of miles lies between Damascus and the Tigris. Still farther north, the desert gradually disappears, and about the latitude of Mosul blends with the hills and vales of Asia Minor. Athwart the country

[1] Tradition here probably anticipates the march of events. It is doubtful whether the Caliph had the city of Al-Hira yet in view; for the aims of Khalid and his Master widened as victory led him onwards.

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35
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BLACK S
CONSTANTINOPLE
Bosphorus
Nicaea
Ancyra
Amorion
Marsiwon
Amasia
Siwas
ASIA MINOR
Ephesus
Konieh
Tyana
Malatia
Sumeisat
Marash
Adana
CILICIA
Manbij
Aleppo
Antioch
Seleucia
Kinnasrin
CYPRUS
Hama
Homs
Tripoli
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Beyrout
Mt Lebanon
SYRIA
Kuryatein
Baalbek
Sidon
DAMASCUS
Mt Hermon
Hauran
Tiberias
Mt Carmel
Jabiya
Caesarea
Adhraat
Bosra
Joppa
Jerash
Ramleh
Jerusalem
Bethlehem
ALEXANDRIA
Gaza
Hebron
Maab
Arish
Muta
PALESTINE
Ain Shems
Ghizeh
Suez
Busir
Memphis
Ayla
SYRIA AND IRAN.
EGYPT
Scale of Statute Miles.
0 50 100 150
30
35

Stanford's Geogl. Estabt. London.

from Aleppo to Babylon runs the Euphrates, while the far east is bounded by the Tigris flowing under the mountain range that separates 'Irāḳ 'Arabi[1] from Persia. Between the two rivers lies Mesopotamia, full of patriarchal memories. Over this great plain there roamed (as still there roam) Bedawi tribes with flocks and herds. The greater part had long professed the Christian religion. Those on the Syrian side, as the Ghassān of Boṣra, owed allegiance to the Roman Empire; those on the east were dependent upon Persia. But nomad life tends to fickle loyalty and laxity of faith; and so, not infrequently, these northern Arabs were now led by affinity with their brethren of Arabia, as well as by the lust of plunder, to desert their ancient allies and ancestral faith, and cast in their lot with the invading columns. A.H. 12.

Chaldæa and Delta of the Euphrates.

The lower Euphrates, 'Irāḳ al-'Arabi, is in striking contrast with the region just described. The two great rivers, while yet far from the sea approach each other; but, instead of joining, still keep apart and, for some two hundred and fifty miles running parallel, inclose the memorable plain of Dura. The country is covered with long hillocks and mounds marking the ancient channels of irrigation, and strewed with fragments of brick and pottery, remnants of a dim antiquity. The face of the land was not then, as now, a barren waste, but richly cultivated and watered by canals. On the Tigris, a little below where the two rivers first approach each other was Al-Medāin, "the double city"[2] (so called from Seleucia on the western bank and Ctesiphon on the eastern), then the capital of Persia. Fifty miles farther south, a mass of shapeless mounds, looking down upon the Euphrates from its eastern shore, marks the site of Babylon, and from their summit may be descried the Birs Nimrud, or "Tower of Babel," rearing its weird head on the horizon of the verdant plain. Thirty miles yet farther south lay Al-Ḥira, capital of the surrounding Arab tribes. It stood (like its successor Al-Kufa) on a branch which issues from the Euphrates by a channel in the live rock, cut by the hand of man but of unknown antiquity. Sweeping along the

[1] 'Irāḳ of the Arabs, as distinguished from *'Irāḳ 'Ajami*, *i.e.* "foreign" or Persian 'Irāḳ.

[2] [Medāin is really the plural of Medina; one would certainly expect a dual.]

A.H. 12. west, this rival stream feeds many marshes, especially the great lake called the "Sea of Najaf"; and, after a wide circuit, rejoins the Euphrates above its junction with the Tigris. There was in olden times another branch called the "Trench of Sapor" which, intended as a bar to Bedawi incursions, and taking a yet wider range to the west, returned into the parent river near Ubulla. This branch, now dry, originally carried a stream, which like the other helped materially to widen the green belt pressed in upon by the western sandy desert. The lower Delta again, subject to tidal flow, alluvial, low and watered with ease, is covered with a sea of corn; and from its beauty has been called the "Garden of the world." Besides the familiar palm, the country abounds with the fig, mulberry, and pomegranate. But the climate is close and oppressive; the fens and marshes, always liable to inundation, were aggravated by neglect of dams and sluices in those days of anarchy; and so the invading force, used to nothing but the sandy steppes of the Peninsula, gazed wonderingly at the luxuriant growth of reeds and rushes, and at the buffaloes driven by pestiferous insects to hide their unwieldy bodies beneath the water, or splash lazily along the shallow waste of endless lagoons. Chaldæa from the estuary upwards was cultivated, as now, by *Fellahin* or Arab peasantry, and these were lorded over by *Dihkáns*, or district officers of the Persian Court.[1]

Khálid summons Hormuz.

Such, then, was the magnificent province lying between the Desert and mountain range of Persia—the cradle of civilisation and the arts—which now attracted the Muslim arms. The first to oppose them was Hormuz, Satrap of the Delta, a tyrant hated by his Arab subjects. To him, as master of the tribes gathering in front, Khalid addressed a letter in the haughty type of Muslim summons: "*Accept the Faith and thou art safe; else pay tribute, thou and thy people; which if thou refusest, thou shalt have thyself to blame. A people is already on thee, loving death even as thou lovest life.*"[2]

[1] On the changes which have taken place in the bed of the Euphrates, and in the province of Al-'Irák generally, see Le Strange, ***Lands of the Eastern Caliphate***, chaps. ii.-v.

[2] Ṭab. i. 2022; similar letters were sent to the people of Al-Medáin (2020).

Then placing Al-Muthanna in command of the advanced column, and 'Adi son of Ḥatim (the famous chieftain of the Beni Ṭai') over the second, Khalid himself bringing up the rear, advanced on Al-Ḥafir, the frontier station of the Persian Empire.[1] A.H. 12.

Battle of Chains. Hormuz slain.

Startled by the strange summons, Hormuz having sent word to Chosroes the King,[2] himself set out to meet the invader with an army whose wings were commanded by Princes of the royal blood. He marched in haste, thinking to have an easy victory over untrained desert tribes; and being first to reach the water bed of Al-Ḥafir, took possession of its springs. Khalid coming up, bade his force alight and at once unload their burdens. "Then," said he, "let us fight for the water forthwith; by my life! the springs shall be for the braver of the two." Thereupon Hormuz challenged Khalid to single combat and, though he treacherously posted an ambuscade, was in the encounter slain. The Muslims then rushed forward and with great slaughter put the enemy to flight, pursuing them to the banks of the Euphrates. The Arabs had now a foretaste of the spoils of Persia. The share of each horseman was a thousand pieces, besides great store of arms. The jewelled tiara of Hormuz, symbol of his rank, was sent to the Caliph with the royal fifth. An elephant taken in the field and led as part of the prize to Medina, was paraded about the town much to the wonder of the admiring citizens, but eventually sent back as unsuitable to the place. The action was called *Dhāt as-Salāsil*, "the Mistress of the Chains," from a portion of the Persian soldiers being bound together (as tradition contemptuously says) to prevent their giving way.

"The Lady's Castle."

The defeated army fled towards the Capital, and Al-Muthanna with his horse hastened after them. Crossing the Euphrates, he came upon a fortress called "The Lady's Castle," held by a Persian princess. Leaving his brother to besiege it, he advanced to a second fort defended by her husband. This he took by storm, and put the garrison to the sword; which, when the lady heard

[1] Ṭab. makes out four columns, one under 'Aṣim ibn 'Amr. Each column was accompanied by a native guide. Al-Ḥafir or Al Ḥufeir was the rendezvous; i. 2022 f.

[2] Shīra ibn Kisra. Ṭab. i. 2023.

A.H. 12. of, she embraced Islām and, forgetting her Persian lord, gave her hand to Al-Muthanna's brother.

Persians again defeated.

The ardour of Al-Muthanna was near to causing a disaster. When the message of Hormuz reached Al-Medain, the King despatched another prince with troops to reinforce him. Rallying the defeated army, this force met Al-Muthanna who had been stopped by the Great Canal (a branch of the Tigris which runs athwart the Peninsula), and placed him with his small flying column in great peril. Khālid, apprised of the check, hastened to relieve his lieutenant, and just in time. The field was fiercely contested. Again the enemy fled; a prodigious number were either slain or drowned; the remainder escaped in boats. The deep canal stopped further pursuit, but the spoil of the camp was very great. Khalid scoured the country, killing all the men fit for war and taking their women captive. But the fellahin or unwarlike peasants he left unharmed.

Victory of Walaja, ii. 12 A.H. April 633 A.D.

The Court was now thoroughly aroused. Arab invaders, it was said, would best be matched by Arabs who knew their tactics; and so the King raised a great levy of the Bekr and other loyal clans, under a famous warrior of their own. He also summoned Bahman, a veteran general, from the east, to command the imperial troops. The combined army, in imposing force, advanced to Al-Walaja, near the junction of the two rivers. Leaving a detachment to guard his conquests in the Delta, Khalid marched to meet the enemy. The battle, long and obstinate, was won by the tactics of the Muslim leader, who surprised the exhausted enemy by ambuscades placed in their rear. The discomfiture was complete. The Persians fled; and with them their Bedawi allies, but not until many had been taken prisoners. Flushed with success as he gazed at the scene around, Khālid thus addressed his followers:—"O see ye not the food, plentiful as flintstones? Ay, by God, were it not ours to fight for God against the unbelievers, and were it only as a means of living, the right opinion would be to lay our stakes for these fair fields, until we show ourselves worthy of them, and give over hunger and penury to those who prefer them, and who find burdensome that which you are enduring."[1]

Khālid's oration.

[1] Tab. i. 2031. Khālid's speech is quoted by Al-Kindi, the Christian Apologist, S.P.C.K., 1887, p. 85.

Khālid here struck a chord delightful to the Bedawi heart. A.H. 12.
Now, also, the inducements with respect to the other sex began to tell. Persian ladies, both maids and matrons, as "captives of their right hand" were forthwith, without stint of number, and by permission which they held divine, lawful to the conqueror's embrace; and, in the enjoyment of this privilege, they were nothing loth to execute upon the heathen "the judgment written." Thus religious fanaticism grew along with martial ardour, both riveted by motives native to the Arab—fight and foray, spoil of war, and captive charms.

Battle of Ulleis, iii. 12 A.H. May 633 A.D.

The cup, however, had but just touched their lips, and many a chance might yet dash it from them. The great family of the Beni Bekr was divided in the struggle, part holding with Khālid and part with Persia. A bitter feeling was aroused between the Bedawin of Mesopotamia and the invaders, aggravated by defeat and by the treatment of those taken captive. Smarting under injury, the Christian tribes roused their nomad brethren on both banks of the Euphrates, and urged the Court of Persia to revenge. Just then Ardashir the King fell sick, and Bahman was detained at Court; but he sent an army across the Euphrates to join the loyal Bedawin, who from every side flocked to Ulleis (Allis), half-way between Al-Ḥīra and Ubulla. News of this great rising forced Khālid to fall back hastily, and recross the Euphrates. Then leaving a strong detachment at Al-Ḥafir to secure his rear, he boldly advanced to meet the enemy. The Arab tribes first rushed to the attack, and Khālid slew their leader. Then the Persians with a vast front came up, and the Muslims were hard pressed as they never had been before. The battle was fiercely contested, and the issue at one time was so doubtful, that Khalid vowed to the Lord that in event of victory the blood of his foes should flow as in a crimson stream. At last the Persians, unable to withstand the impetuous onset, broke and fled. To fulfil his savage oath, Khalid proclaimed that no fugitive should be slain, but all brought alive into the camp. For two days the country was scoured by the Muslim horse, and a great multitude of prisoners gathered. Then the butchery commenced in the dry bed of a canal, but the earth drank up the blood. Company after company was beheaded, and

The "River of Blood."

A.H. 12. still the gory flux remained. At last, by advice of an Arab chief, Khalid had a floodgate opened, and the blood-red tide redeemed his vow. There were flour-mills upon the spot, and for three days corn for the army was ground by the reddened flood. We may hope that tradition has magnified the details of this great barbarity; but its memory lived in the name of the "River of Blood" by which thereafter the ill-omened stream was called.

A Persian supper on the field.

The battle over, a sumptuous repast was found ready spread in the enemy's camp, to which the Persians, when surprised by Khalid, were about to sit down:—a novel experience for the simple Arabs, who handled the white fritters with childish delight, and devoured with avidity rich pancakes and other Eastern delicacies. Khalid ate his supper leaning on the body of a stalwart hero, "the equal of a thousand warriors," whom in single combat he had but just cut down. Tidings of the victory, with choice portion of the spoil, a welcome earnest of the royal fifth to follow, were at once despatched to Abu Bekr. The messenger, himself a brave warrior, described the heat and progress of the battle, the feats and prowess of its heroes, the multitude of captives and the riches of the spoil. The Caliph, overjoyed at his glowing tale, bestowed upon the envoy a beautiful damsel from amongst the captive maidens he had carried with him.

Abu Bekr's delight.

The principality of Hira.

For the moment the spirit of the Persians was broken; but their Bedawi allies proved so troublesome to Khalid, and occupied a position from which they could so materially annoy his rear and communications with Medina, that he resolved on reducing the whole tract west of the Euphrates occupied by these tribes, together with Al-Hira its capital. The Lakhmid dynasty had long ceased to rule over this city, which now for many years had been governed by a Persian Satrap. Partly from its interests being akin to those of the Christian tribes of Mesopotamia, partly from its being a dependency of Persia, the influence of Al-Hira had hitherto been little felt in Arabia proper. But recent events had shown that even the Beni Bekr might combine with the border capital to resist the invader; and to prevent the recurrence of such a danger, Khalid now directed his steps to Al-Hira.

With this view he advanced rapidly up the western channel of the Euphrates, and surprised Amghīsiyā, a town the rival of Al-Ḥīra in size and wealth.[1] The inhabitants fled, and the booty was so rich that each horseman's share reached 1500 pieces. When the fifth reached Medīna, Abu Bekr was overwhelmed at the sight; "Oh ye Ḳoreish," he exclaimed in ecstasy, "verily your lion, the lion of Islām, hath leapt upon the lion of Persia, and spoiled him of his prey. Surely the womb is exhausted. Woman shall no more bear a second Khālid!" A.H. 12. Amghīsiyā sacked.

Finding boats at Amghīsiyā, Khalid embarked his infantry and baggage, and was tracking up the stream to Al-Ḥīra when, the Satrap having opened some irrigating escapes above, the flotilla grounded suddenly. Apprised of the cause, Khālid hastened with a flying squadron to the canal-head, closed the sluices and enabled the boats again to ascend. Then the army, having disembarked and taken possession of the beautiful palaces of the Princes of Al-Ḥīra,[2] encamped before the city walls. The Satrap fled across the river; but the city, defended as it was by four citadels, refused to surrender. The ramparts were manned, and the besiegers kept at bay by the discharge of missiles. A monastery and cloisters lay without; and at length the monks and clergy, exposed to the fury of the besiegers, induced the citizens to capitulate on easy terms embodied in a treaty. Then they brought gifts, which Khalid accepted and despatched to Medīna. Abu Bekr ratified the treaty and accepted the presents, but desired that their value should be deducted from the tribute. Ḥīra besieged and capitulates.

The men of Al-Ḥīra bound themselves to pay a yearly tribute, for which all classes, saving religious mendicants, were assessed. The Muslims, on their part, engaged to protect the city from attack. The treaty, though shortly set aside by the rising which swept over the land, is interesting as the first concluded with a principality lying without the Peninsula. One strange condition may be mentioned. The beauty of Kerāma had been long proverbial, and a soldier laid claim to her on the ground that Mohammad, hearing him extol her charms, had promised (so the story Treaty with Ḥīra.

[1] Another form of the name is said to have been Namīshīyā.

[2] *Life of Mahomet*, 1861, vol. i. p. clxxi.

A.H. 12. runs) that when Al-Hira was captured she should be his bride. Khalid insisted that the prophetic promise should be now fulfilled. The thing was grievous to the lady's household, but she took it lightly. "Care not for it," she said, "the fool saw me in my youth, and hath forgotten that youth remaineth not for ever." He soon found out that it was even so, and was glad to name a ransom, which having paid, she returned to her people.

Hira remains Christian, 12 A.H. 633 A.D.

The occupation of Al-Hira was the first definite step in the outward movement of Islam. Here Khalid fixed his headquarters and remained a year. It was, in fact, the earliest Muslim capital beyond the limits of Arabia. The administration was left with the heads of the city, who were at the least neutral. Khalid, indeed, expected that being of Arab descent, and themselves long ruled by a native dynasty, the inhabitants would actively have joined his cause. 'Adi, grandson of the poet of that name, was one of the deputation which concluded the peace. "Tell me," said Khalid, rallying him, "whether ye be of Arab or of Persian blood?" "Judge by our speech; doth that betray ignoble birth?" "True," answered Khalid; "then why do ye not join our faith, and cast in your lot with us?" "Nay," answered the Christian, "that we shall never do; the faith of our fathers we shall not abjure, but shall pay tribute unto thee." "Beshrew the fools!" cried Khalid; "unbelief is as a trackless desert; and the wanderer in it the silliest of the Arabs. Here are two guides, an Arab and a stranger; and of the two they choose the stranger!" The flux and reflux of Roman invasion had, no doubt, loosened their faith in Persia; but the Court of Al-Medain was near at hand and, though in the last stage of senility, sufficiently strong to retain its hold upon a small dependency like Al-Hira. The permanence of Arab conquest, too, was yet uncertain; the love of their ancestral faith was still predominant; and so the city chose to remain tributary. Several centuries later we find the inhabitants of the neighbourhood in considerable numbers still attached to the Christian faith.[1]

Prayer and Service of Victory.

Public prayer, outward symbol of the dominant faith, was

[1] The feeling of this Christian principality in losing first their native rulers, and then being swallowed up in the Muslim invasion, is well

now established; and the citizens might hear the cry of the Muëzzin, as five times a day, beginning with the earliest dawn, it resounded from the adjacent camp. Khālid celebrated his success in a special *Service of Victory*. The occasion was memorable. Clad in a flowing robe girt loosely about the neck, he turned, when prayers were ended, to the assembly and thus extolled their bravery: "In the field of Mūta, when fighting with the Greeks, nine swords were broken in my hand. But I met not any there to match the foes ye have encountered here; and of these none more valiant than the men of Ulleis." The early campaign in Al-'Irāḳ, indeed, is surrounded by tradition with a special halo; for the loss on the Muslim side had not hitherto been great, and the fighting here could hardly have compared with that of many a well-contested field in the Prophet's time. A.H. 12.

Administration of the province.

While Al-Ḥira was left in the hands of its chief men, summary rule was set up over the adjacent country. The *Dihkāns*—great landholders and imperial taxgatherers—had been waiting upon fortune. Seeing now that Khālid carried everything before him, many began to tender submission and enter into engagements for the revenue. Abu Bekr had wisely enjoined that the fellāḥin should be maintained in possession, and their rights as occupiers of the soil respected. The demand remained unchanged, with the addition only of a light poll-tax. In other respects, the terms, made with the consent and approval of the army, corresponded with those of Al-Ḥira. Holding their ancestral faith, the people became *dhimmīs*, or protected dependants. Khalid undertook

expressed in these verses sung by one of their poets. Al Mundhir and An-No'mān were Princes of the Lakhmid dynasty:—

"Now that the Princes of the house of Al-Mundhir are gone, shall I ever again behold the royal herd of camels returning at eve from the pastures of Khawarnaḳ and Sedīr?

Now that the horsemen of An-No'man are passed away, shall I ever again feed the young she-camel on the pastures between Mecca and Hafīr?

Like a flock of goats on a stormy day, we are scattered by the Beni Ma'add (the invading Muslims), even as pieces of camels slaughtered for the feast.

Heretofore our homes were sacred, and we like the teats of a well-filled udder,

Yielding tribute at the appointed times to the Chosroes, and imposts in cattle and gold.

Such is Fortune: her revolution is like that of the buckets. Now the day ascends with joy and gladness, and now it sinks into darkness and distress."

A.H. 12. to defend them, and they on their part pledged allegiance, and bound themselves to give notice if danger threatened. Garrisons were quartered here and there, and the troops held ready in movable columns. Thus the country west of the Euphrates was kept in check, and also the lower Delta to the east. Throughout this region none was secure from rapine but such as had entered into engagements. Hostages were taken for the revenue; and a formal discharge given upon its payment. The tribute, as well as the booty, was all distributed amongst the army "for the strengthening of its will and emboldening of its courage."

Persia paralysed by internal troubles.

Persia meanwhile was hopelessly distracted. Male progeny near the throne had been so ruthlessly massacred, that no heir of royal blood could anywhere be found, and a rapid succession of feeble claimants was set up by the princesses left to form the Court. Thus paralysed, the Persians did little more than protect Al-Medáin by holding in force the country opposite as far as the Nahr-shir, a deep channel which, drawn from the Euphrates, flowed athwart the Peninsula. This line was threatened by Al-Muthanna; but Abu Bekr gave stringent orders that no advance should be made till all was secure behind. No tidings, moreover, had as yet been received from 'Iyad at Duma, with whom co-operation was imperative. Khálid fretted at remaining thus inactive, "playing," as he complained, "for so many months the woman's part." But he curbed his ardour, and contented himself with inditing two letters, in imperious tone, one to "the Princes of Persia," the other to "the Satraps and inhabitants at large."

Anbár.

Towards the north and west, however, aggressive measures were continued. Siege was laid to Al-Anbar, a fortress on the Euphrates some eighty miles above Babylon. The worn-out camels of the army were slain and cast into the deep fosse, which thus was crossed and the city captured. The Persian governor sued for terms, and was permitted to retire. Al-Anbar and the well-watered neighbourhood thus secured, the army attacked 'Ain at-Tamr, the Spring of the Date palm, a fortress on the desert border three days' journey farther west. The Persian troops were here supported by a great gathering of Arab tribes, and among them the same Taghlib levies which had followed their

prophetess to Al-Yemāma. These met Khālid as he approached, but were repulsed, and the Persian governor seeing the route from the ramparts, fled and left the fugitives to defend themselves as best they could. Refused terms, they surrendered at discretion. The persistent opposition of the Christian Bedawin now led Khālid into an unwise severity that embittered them against him. Their leader was beheaded in front of the city walls, and every adult male of the garrison led forth and put to death; while the women and children were made over to the soldiers or sold into slavery. In a cloister of the church hard by, were forty youths who in their terror barred the door upon the enemy. When the retreat was forced, they gave themselves up as students receiving instruction in the Gospel. Their lives were spared, and they were distributed among the leaders. The fate of these unfortunate youths, snatched from a Nestorian seminary to be brought up as captives in the Muslim faith, must have been common enough in the rude and sanguinary tide of Saracen invasion; the reason why tradition makes special mention of these, is that amongst them were progenitors of several distinguished men, such as Ibn Isḥaḳ the historian, and Musa the conqueror of Spain.

A.H. 12.

Khālid's severity.

Christian students.

All this while 'Iyaḍ, who ought long before to have joined Khalid, was battling unsuccessfully with enemies at Dūma. The Caliph becoming anxious, sent Al-Welid who had been deputed by Khalid to Medina in charge of royal booty, to assist 'Iyaḍ, who by his advice despatched an urgent message for help to Khalid. The courier arrived just after the fall of 'Ain at-Tamr; and Khalid, with no enemy now in the field, answered 'Iyaḍ thus in martial verse—

'Iyāḍ at Dūma.

"Wait, my friend, but for a moment, speedily shall help appear;
Cohort upon cohort follows, waving sword and glittering spear."

Leaving Al-Ḳa'ḳa' in command at Al-Ḥira, and starting at once with the flower of his force, he crossed the intervening desert, and made good his word.

He was not a day too soon. Okeidir and Al-Jūdi, Chiefs of Duma, were supported by the Beni Kelb and other tribes from the Syrian desert; and now the Beni Ghassan were pouring down from the north, under Jabala, the Christian prince of Boṣra. The position of 'Iyaḍ, thus beset, grew

Dūma stormed by Khālid, vii. 12 A.H. Sept. 633 A.D.

A.H. 12.

day by day more critical. The advent of Khalid changed the scene at once. His very name was a tower of strength. Okeidir had already felt his prowess, having several years before been taken by him prisoner to Medina.[1] Much afraid, he hastened to surrender, but on the way was taken prisoner and beheaded. Then 'Iyad on the Syrian side and Khalid on the Persian, attacked the hostile tribes and utterly routed them. Jabala effected his flight to Bosra. But the helpless crowd that remained were hemmed in between the two forces and none escaped. The gate of the fort was battered down, and the crowded inmates put promiscuously to the sword. The women were sold to the highest bidder; and the most beautiful of them, the daughter of the unfortunate Jūdi, was bought by Khalid for himself. Celebrating thus fresh nuptials on the field of battle, he enjoyed a short repose at Dūma, while the main body of the troops, marching back to Al-Hira, were there received with timbrels and cymbals and outward demonstrations of rejoicing.

Expeditions in 'Irāḳ, viii. 12 A.H. Oct. 633 A.D.

But all was not going on smoothly in that vicinity. The absence of Khalid had encouraged the Persians and their Arab allies, especially the Beni Taghlib, still smarting under the execution of their leader, to resume offensive operations. Al-Ḳa'ḳa', though on the alert, was able to do no more than guard the frontier and protect Al-Anbar from threatened inroad.[2] At this news, Khalid hastened back; and placing 'Iyad in the government of Al-Hira, despatched Al-Ḳa'ḳa' across the Euphrates, while he himself appointed a rendezvous at 'Ain at-Tamr to attack the Taghlib tribe; for he had vowed that thus he would crush the viper in its nest. On the eastern bank, the Persians were routed and their leaders killed; while on the western, by a series of brilliant and well-planned night attacks, the Bedawin were repeatedly surprised as they slept secure in their desert homes, cut to pieces, and their families carried off. Thus Khalid fulfilled his vow. Multitudes of women, many of noble birth, were distributed among the army. A portion also, with rich booty, were sent to Medina, and there disposed of by sale.[3]

[1] *Life of Moḥammad*, p. 443 f. [2] Ṭab. i. 2068 f.

[3] One was bought by 'Ali. He had recently taken into his *ḥarim* another girl, one of the captives of Al-Yemama; she was of the Hanifa

A.H. 12.

Battle of Firād. Persians, Greeks, and Bedawīn defeated, xi. 12 A.H. Jan. 634 A.D.

Following up his Bedawi foes, Khālid at last reached Al-Firad on the Syrian border, and by the river rested his army during the fast of Ramaḍān and for some weeks after. But the Byzantine garrison on the frontier, uneasy at the prolonged encampment and threatening attitude of Khālid, and making common cause with the Persian outposts and neighbouring loyal tribes, advanced in imposing force to chase the invader away. They challenged Khālid to cross the river; but the wary General bade them rather come over to the eastern bank. A long and severe conflict ensued. The Muslims were victorious; the cavalry pursued the fugitives, and the carnage must have been great, for tradition places it at the fabulous number of a hundred thousand.

Khālid's incognito pilgrimage, xii. 12 A.H. Feb. 634 A.D.

For the moment opposition was crushed, and no enemy anywhere in sight. The season for the Meccan pilgrimage being now at hand, Khālid formed the singular resolve of performing it incognito — unknown even to his royal Master. So, having recruited his army for ten days on the well-fought field, he gave orders to march slowly and by easy stages back to Al-Ḥīra. Then, making as though he remained behind, he set out secretly with a small escort on the pious errand. Without a guide, he traversed the devious desert route with marvellous sagacity and speed. Having accomplished the rites of Pilgrimage, he retraced his steps from Mecca with like despatch, and re-entered Al-Ḥīra in early spring, just as the rear-guard was marching in. So well had he kept his secret, that the army thought he had been all the while at Al-Firād, and now was journeying slowly back. Even Abu Bekr, who himself presided at the pilgrimage, was unaware of the presence of his great general. When, after some time, the secret visit came to his knowledge, he was much displeased. But the action which he took in consequence belongs to the succeeding year.

tribe, and the son she bore him, hence called Ibn al-Ḥanefiya (the son of the Ḥanefite woman), whose descendants being thus of the stock of 'Ali, had a political *rôle* of which we shall hear hereafter. He is said also to have married in this year a granddaughter of the Prophet, Umāma, the child of Zeinab, and niece of his deceased wife Fāṭima.

CHAPTER IX

CAMPAIGN IN SYRIA. BATTLE OF AJNĀDAIN. CAPITULATION OF FIHL

12-13 A.H. 633-634 A.D.

Khālid ibn Sa'id posted on Syrian border, 12 A.H. 633 A.D.

THE campaign in Syria opened under a very different Khalid son of Sa'id, at least according to Seif, one of the oldest authorities. An early convert, and as such an exile to Abyssinia, he held high place as a confessor of the Faith. Employed as envoy in the south, he was forced to retreat in the turmoil following the Prophet's death, and now claimed fresh command. Although 'Omar (whom, to be sure, he had maligned) doubted his fitness, Abu Bekr overcome by importunity, sent him to rally the friendly tribes on the Syrian frontier; but unless attacked he was to take no forward step. The Greeks, in the hope of capturing his camels, summoned their Bedawi allies and assumed a threatening attitude. Khalid was thereupon permitted to advance, yet cautiously and so as to allow no danger in his rear. Proceeding onwards to the Dead Sea, he routed there a Syrian column under the Byzantine general Bahan (Baanes); but finding himself so far away, he called urgently for reinforcements. Just then the Muslim troops, having crushed apostasy in the south, were returning in great numbers to Medina, and so were available for any other service. 'Ikrima, son of Abu Jahl and Al-Welid ibn Okba, were despatched in haste to support Khalid in the north, whilst a Holy War was proclaimed at Medina, and other Emirs appointed over the levies, for (according to this narrator) it was now that Abu Bekr first thought of conquering Syria.

'Ikrima sent to his support.

A.H. 12-13.

Khālid ibn Sa'id defeated at Merj Soffar, near Sea of Tiberias.

Emboldened by these reinforcements, Khālid ibn Sa'īd hastened in the early spring to gain the first laurels of the campaign. Forgetful of his Master's caution, he was in his eagerness decoyed by Bāhān towards Damascus. He had reached as far as Merj aṣ-Ṣoffar to the east of the Sea of Tiberias, when the enemy closed in upon his rear and cut off his retreat. His son Sa'īd was amongst the slain, and Khālid fled with the remnant of his army for Medīna.

Variant accounts.

This expedition of Khālid ibn Sa'īd rests, as has been said, upon one authority, that of Seif. This Seif, however—he lived in the latter half of the eighth century A.D.—has rather a weakness for ascribing doughty deeds to the fathers in the Faith, and Khālid, who was one of these, was of the same mind. But it is difficult to believe that the Muslims penetrated to Damascus on this occasion, and there may be some confusion with a battle fought there later. Moreover, the other authorities give a different account of the affair. They say that the oppositions of 'Omar was such that Khālid did not leave Arabia, but was superseded in his command, his place being taken by Yezīd, a son of Abu Sufyān.

Divisions of army.

The army was in three divisions of 5000 men each, the commanders of two of these being Shurahbil son of Ḥasana (his mother) and the redoubtable 'Amr ibn al-'Aṣ. The last, if any, was commander-in-chief *de facto* if not *de jure*. To each of these divisions one of the districts of Syria was assigned as its field of operations. 'Amr was to make for Ayla, at the head of the Gulf of Akaba, and thence invade southern Syria or Palestine. Yezid and Shurahbil were to make first for Tebūk, whence the latter was to invade central Syria, whilst the former pushed on towards Damascus.[1] Mu'awiya, the future Caliph, bore the standard of his brother Yezid—a presage of the higher dignity which awaited him. Khalid ibn Sa'id is said to have joined as

[1] Syria, under the Muslims, perhaps from the time of 'Omar, was divided into five military districts, each called a *jund*, viz.—Kinnasrin (Chalcis), Ḥimṣ (district of Emesa), Damascus, El-Urdunn or the Jordan (on either side of that river down to the Dead Sea), and Filastin or Palestine, in the south and west up to Carmel. These names are used proleptically by the Arab historians in speaking of the earliest period.

A.H. 12-13. a volunteer Shurahbil's detachment. The nomination of the three was made in the second month (Safar) of the year 13 A.H., April 634 A.D.

Abu 'Obeida. As fresh volunteers arrived in Medina, they were sent on to the support of the three commanders. Abu 'Obeida the son of Al-Jarrah appears to have been at the head of one of these supporting columns; and the dislike to regard a companion of such eminence as second in command may have given rise to another account according to which there were in all, not three, but four columns sent to the invasion of Syria, Abu 'Obeida being even regarded as holding supreme command over the others. However that may be, the invading army soon amounted to 24,000 men. This included a corps of observation under 'Ikrima.

Syrian army. The force thus brought together differed altogether in composition from the army of Al-'Irak. That in the main consisted of Bedawi tribes, which flocked in thousands to the banners of Al-Muthanna and Khalid; the men of Mecca and Medina amongst them were comparatively few; for most had returned to their homes after the battle of Al-Yemama. In the Syrian army, on the contrary, there are reckoned at least a thousand "Companions," *i.e.* men who had seen and conversed with the Prophet, and no fewer than a hundred of the famous 300 of Bedr. These enrolled themselves at pleasure under the chief of their choice; but once enrolled, they yielded to that leader implicit obedience; while he, on his part, was bound to consult their views and wishes on all occasions of importance. Sheikhs of renown, who but a few years before had wielded the whole power of Mecca, and haughty chieftains of high descent, now joined with alacrity the column of anyone into whose hands the Caliph was pleased to present the banner of command, however young or inferior to themselves in dignity. And the whole force, thus formed in separate detachments, held itself at the absolute disposal of the Commander of the Faithful.

The send-off. Duly sensible of the gravity of the enterprise—nothing short of measuring swords with the Emperor—the Caliph strained every nerve to meet it. He had thrown down the gauntlet, and was waging war at one and the same time with the Potentates both of the East and of the West. The brigades now formed for this great venture were pitched one

after another on the plain of the Jurf at a little distance from Medina on the track leading to the North; and as each was ready to march the Caliph went on foot by the side of its mounted leader, and gave him thus his farewell commands:— A.H. 12-13.

"Men," he would say,[1] "I have ten orders to give you, which you must observe loyally: Deceive none and steal from none; betray none and mutilate none; kill no child, nor woman, nor aged man; neither bark nor burn the date palms; cut not down fruit trees nor destroy crops; slaughter not flocks, cattle, nor camels except for food. You will fall in with some men with shaven crowns; smite them thereon with the sword. You will also meet with men living in cells; leave them alone in that to which they have devoted themselves."

Instructions of a more general character were given to the leader,—to promise good government to the invaded people, and to keep his promise; not to say much at a time, and always to be straightforward; to respect ambassadors, but not to detain them long lest they became spies; to preserve secrecy where necessary; to make the round of sentinels by night and by day; and never to be slack.

Favouring circumstances.

The entrance of the Muslims into Syria was much facilitated by a circumstance which had occurred shortly before. The Byzantine Emperor had been in the habit of remitting to the Arab tribes in the south of Palestine an annual subsidy; but from motives of economy, rendered necessary by the expenses incurred in the war with Persia, this had but lately been withdrawn. The tribes, therefore, considered themselves free from their allegiance and threw in their lot with the invaders. The people of Syria, too, apart from the religious persecution to which they had been subjected, suffered from increased taxation, and in consequence remained passive spectators of the invasion of their country, hoping more, indeed, from an occupation by the Arabs, who abstained from pillage, and whose rule

[1] One account makes Abu Bekr address these words to Usāma (see p. 9), another to Yezid. In one the two last clauses—the injunctions to slay monks and spare hermits—are omitted. As to the other points, *cf.* Deut. xx. 14, 19.

A.H. 12-13. was mild and tolerant, than from the continuance of the *status quo*.

The first encounter.

The first encounter apparently took place in the 'Araba, or valley between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akaba, and ended in the defeat of a force of 3000 Greeks. On hearing of the invasion, Sergius, the governor of Palestine, hastened from Cæsarea with a small force of three hundred men. He fell in with 'Amr at a point not far from Gaza, and his little company was cut to pieces and he himself slain. These victories were the fruits of surprise, and the cautious 'Amr, instead of pushing on, fell back to the 'Araba, sending Yezid, Abu 'Obeida, and Shurabbil into the Belka and the Hauran, whilst he himself waited for reinforcements from Medina.

Khālid transferred to Syria.

To Abu Bekr the invasion of Syria was of much more importance than that of Al-'Irak; he therefore resolved to transfer Khalid from the latter to the West. This mandate disconcerted Khalid at the first. He set it down to 'Omar, who, envying him the conquest of Al-'Irak, would thus snatch it from his hand. There was reason for the fear. But had Abu Bekr lived, it had been otherwise, for his instructions were:—"Take with thee half the army, and leave Al-Muthanna half. When the Lord shall give thee victory in Syria, then thou shalt return to thy command in Al-'Irak." Reconciled by the assurance, and loyal to his Chief, Khalid began by selecting the Companions and flower of the force which should accompany him to Syria. Al-Muthanna insisted that the division should be equal, and was at last conciliated by securing a goodly portion of the Veterans. The strength of either moiety was about 9000. Al-Muthanna accompanied the great General whom he had served so loyally, to the border of the desert, and taking a last farewell, retraced his steps to Al-Hira.

Marches across the Syrian desert.

The authorities differ as to the route which Khalid followed, but on two points there is general agreement, the first, that his starting point was 'Ain at-Tamr, in the desert to the west of the Euphrates and due south of Hit; the second, that the latter half of the journey was from Arak or Urak (near Palmyra), Tadmor (Palmyra), and Karyatein (Cariatein) to Merj Rahit (the meadow just outside of

A.H. 12-13.
The route followed.

Damascus). The point in dispute is whether he passed from 'Ain at-Tamr to Arak *viâ* Dumat al-Jandal (as Sir William Muir, following Ibn al-Athīr, believed), or by a direct north-westerly march (as M. de Goeje, after weighing the evidence of the various sources, concluded). This much is certain that the untraced part of the route included a long march through waterless desert—between two points called respectively Ḳorāḳir and Suwa, of which, however, the sites are not known. Ibn al-Athir thus describes this daring achievement:—Khālid reached Ḳoraḳir (a watering-place belonging to the Kelb tribe) and bethought him how he should proceed to Suwā, a desert journey of five days. He found a guide whose name was Rafi', son of 'Omeira, of the tribe of Ṭai', who warned him that to travel with horses and baggage was impossible. "For, by Allah, even single horsemen fear to follow this track." Khālid replied: "There is no other way, if we are to fetch a compass round the Greeks and not let them cut us off from succouring our friends." So he ordered the leader of each company to take water for five days, and to deprive a sufficient number of the best camels of water, and then let them drink once and again until they could hold no more. Next they must tie up the camels' ears and bind their lips so that they should not ruminate. So haply might the water last. At each stage across the wilderness, ten such camels were slain for each troop of a hundred lances. The water drawn from their bodies was mixed with their milk for the horses. On the fifth day the supply was at an end. When they had reached the neighbourhood of Al-'Alamein (the two waymarks), where water should have been, the guide cried in despair: "Look if you see the box-thorn; it is about the height of a man sitting." They replied that they could not see any. Then he cried: "To God we belong and unto Him do we return. You are lost, by God! and I am lost along with you" (for his sight had become affected). "Look again, ill be upon you!" So they looked and found one tree. It had been cut down, so that only the root remained. Then they shouted, Allāhu Akbar!—God is most great. So they dug and found a spring and all drank. "By God!" said the guide, "I never came before to this spring except once with my father when I was a boy."

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The truth of this incident is vouched for by two verses of poetry:

How excellent are the two wells of Rāfi', and how well he was guided. He crossed the desert from Koraḳir to Suwā.

In a five days' march, which, when an army makes, it weeps. Never before you had there made it visible mortal.

And effects junction with Syrian army, iv. v. 13 A.H. June, July 634.

On coming within sight of Damascus at a point some four leagues to the north-east on the track leading from Emesa under the eastern declivities of Anti-Libanus, Khalid paused for a moment to wave a banner, a symbol of the speedy occupation of the country to which he confidently looked forward. The eminence on which he stood still bears the name Thaniyat al-'Okab—the Pass of the Banner.[1] It was the very spot from which the Arabian Prophet some fifty years earlier had obtained his first and only view of the Green City.

Passing under the walls of Damascus, to the astonishment of some Ghassanid tribesmen, who were celebrating a festival—either Easter or Pentecost—and having, it is said, had some communication with the Prefect or Bishop of the City, Khalid was not long in reaching Bosra, where he joined Yezid, Shurahbil, and Abu 'Obeida. The capitulation of Bosra was accepted on the verbal promise of the governor, and the four generals moved southwards to join 'Amr, who had meantime remained stationary in the 'Araba.

The two armies compared.

Sir William Muir gives the following description of the opposing forces:—The Byzantine army numbered 240,000,[2] of whom a portion were felons released for the occasion, and others chained in line that they might not fly, or in token rather of resolve to die. Such are the exaggerated, and it may be fanciful, rumours handed down as, no doubt, current in the Muslim ranks. But whatever abatement is made from them, so much we may readily accept, that the army with which Heraclius sought to stay the surging tide of Saracen invasion must needs have been very large. We may also believe that though devoid of union, loyalty, and valour, it was well appointed, and elated by its achievements in the Persian war. In discipline and combined movement, and

[1] Or the Eagle's Pass. On Baedeker's map (after Wetstein) it is named Teniyet Abu 'l-'Atā.

[2] One of the oldest Arab authorities gives 100,000.

also in equipment, the Byzantine must vastly have surpassed the Arab force. But the Bedawi horse excelled in celerity and dash. Their charge, if light, was galling, and so rapidly delivered that ere the surprise was over, the troop itself might be out of sight. The Byzantine army, it is true, had Bedawi auxiliaries as numerous, perhaps, as the whole Muslim army. But their spirit widely differed. The fealty of the Syrian Arab was lax and loose. Christian in name, the yoke of his faith sat lightly on him. Indeed, throughout the empire, Christianity was eaten up of strife and rancour. With reinforcements came a troop of Monks and Bishops, who, bearing banners, waving gold crosses, and shouting that the faith was in jeopardy, sought thus to rouse the passion of the army. The passion roused was often but the scowl of hatred. Bitter schisms then rent the Church, and the cry of the Orthodox for help would strike a far different chord than that of patriotism in the Eutychian and Nestorian breast. Lastly, the social and ancestral associations of the Syrian Bedawi, alien from his Byzantine masters, were in full accord with his brethren from Arabia; and of such instinctive feeling, the invaders knew well to take advantage. With this lukewarm and disunited host, compare the Muslim in its virgin vigour, bound together as one man, and fired with a wild and fanatic fervour to "fight in the way of the Lord," winning thus at one and the same time heavenly favour and worldly fortune. For the survivors there were endless spoil, captive maidens, fertile vales, houses which they builded not, and wells which they had not digged. Should they fall by the sword, there were the Martyr's prize of paradise, and black-eyed "Houries" waiting impatiently for the happy hour. The soldiers' imagination was inflamed by tales of heaven opened on the very battlefield, and the expiring warrior tended by two virgins wiping away the sweat and dust from off his face, and with the wanton graces of paradise drawing him upwards in their fond embrace. Of an army, nerved by this strange combination of incentives, divine and human,—of the flesh and of the spirit, faith and rapine, heavenly devotion and passion for the sex even in the throes of death,—ten might chase a hundred of the half-hearted Greeks. The 40,000 Muslims were stronger far than the 240,000 of the enemy.

A.H. 12-13.

The Greek army,

and the Muslim.

A.H. 12-13.

The Battle of Ajnadain 28 v. 13 A.H. 31 vii. 634.

The Byzantine army was under the command of Theodore (Tadhariḳ), brother of the Emperor; and the two hosts met on the fatal field of Ajnadain, between Ramleh and Beit Jibrin (Eleutheropolis), on Saturday, the 28th Jumadà I., in the year 13 A.H. (31st July 634 A.D.). This date may be regarded as certain. It is otherwise with the situation of Ajnadain, which is variously stated to be in the Hauran on the east of the Jordan, or nothing but another name for Lejjun (Megiddo); for Lejjun is the Latin *Legionum*, and Ajnadain is from the Arabic *junud* (army). The latter supposition would imply that the south of Palestine had already been won and that the combatants were now fighting for central Palestine—what was later called the Jordan province; whilst to the former the main objection is that the Greeks would not have devoted such an immense host merely to defend outlying districts peopled for the most part by nomads. It was evidently destined to protect a vital part of the Imperial dominions. The position of Ajnadain, as lying in Palestine between Ramleh and Beit Jibrin, is required by the military situation at the moment, and is confirmed by some contemporary verses, according to which the fugitives after the battle fled for shelter to the walls of Jerusalem.[1]

One early Arabic author (Al-Biladhuri, d. 279 A.H., 892 A.D.) gives the number of the Greeks in this engagement as 100,000, which may be exaggerated. Theodore, the Emperor's brother, was in supreme command, but Artabun (Aretion) the commandant of Palestine is also mentioned, for example, in the verses referred to above, as well as some others. Almost all the Arabic authors mention an incident of the defeat, which they considered very curious. One of the generals, determined not to survive the defeat, covering his head with his mantle, awaited his end. Theodore fled to Emesa where the Emperor was. He was

[1] In the earlier editions of *The Caliphate* the battle of the Yarmuḳ was the first great battle fought in Palestine. This order of events is founded upon the narrative of the above-mentioned Seif (adopted by Ibn al-Athir), but it may be due to there being a place of similar name near Ajnadain. In consequence, there has been a good deal of confusion of the two battles. Certain Arab heroes are said sometimes to have perished in one battle, sometimes in the other.

sent to Constantinople in disgrace, from which he did not emerge again. Heraclius retired upon Antioch. For the Muslims a result of the victory was the reduction of Gaza and the surrounding towns. Abu Bekr lived to see the first great step taken towards the conquest of the province he most desired to see brought under the sway of the Arabs. It was the first-fruits of the wisdom he had shown in transferring Khālid from Al-'Irāḳ to Syria. He died a month later on the 22nd Jumādà II. A.H. 12-13.

The death of Abu Bekr did not make much difference to the army in Syria. 'Omar, whom he nominated as his successor, had long had a large share in the supreme authority; and greatly as the first and second Caliphs differed in many respects, there was no break in the continuity of their foreign policy.[1] The capture of Gaza was followed by the siege of Sebaste (Samaria) and Neapolis (Shechem, Nābulus), the city of the Samaritans. Both of these capitulated; and other towns taken by the Muslims at this time were Lydda, Emmaus, Jaffa, and Beit Jibrin. The lives and goods of the inhabitants were spared; but the poll-tax was exacted from the men, and the land-tax (*kharāj*) imposed on the soil. Up to this point the Muslim army in Syria had acted as a unit, apparently under the chief command of 'Amr; but now their forces divided, and 'Amr remained to complete the conquest of Palestine (Filastin), whilst Khālid pushed forward into the province of the Jordan. Evidence of the success which waited upon the Muslim arms may be read in a sermon delivered by Sophronius, Archbishop of Jerusalem, on Christmas Day, 634, in which he bewails the inability of his people to make their wonted pilgrimage to Bethlehem on account of the country being in the hands of the Saracens, and the scene of the Nativity itself being (it was said) besieged by them. Towns capitulate.

Meantime the wreck of Theodore's army, reinforced by fresh troops, had re-formed in the direction of Beisan (Bethshean, Scythopolis), in the Jordan valley south of the Sea of Galilee, having a bridge over that river in their rear. They attempted to stay the Muslim advance by damming up the numerous mountain streams which flow across the plain, thus turning the country into a swamp, so Battles at Beisân and Fihl.

[1] See, however, p. 143 ff.

A.H. 12-13. that the horses of the Arabs slipped or sank, and their main arms were put out of action. The stratagem, however, told against the Greeks themselves, for if the enemy could not advance, they themselves could not retreat. Details are wanting; but once more the Arabs, under the invincible Khalid, gained the upper hand, and the Greeks were driven across the Jordan and took up a fresh position at Fihl or Fahl, the ancient Pella, which lay on an eminence overlooking the River to the south-east. After a short investment this place also capitulated on the same terms as Sebaste and Neapolis had done. This happened about one month from the close of the year 13.[1] The province of Gaulanitis (Jaulan or Decapolis) was quickly overrun, and the Muslim armies found themselves within two days of the Capital of Syria, Damascus. Here they seem to have rested for some time, awaiting fresh instructions from the Caliph. The country furnished abundance of fodder and supplies; and the people of the Arab kings of Ghassan were not the friends, even if they had been the dependents, of the Greek Emperor.

It may have been here that the Muslims suffered a reverse which, in the narratives of Seif and other ancient sources, is placed at the beginning of the conquest.[2] Khalid ibn Sa'id had ventured from the main body as far as Merj as-Soffar ('the Birds' Meadow'), one of the meadows lying outside Damascus, between that city and the Khaulan district. Here he was surprised by a force of 4000 Greeks. The fight was furious and fatal. The blood of the slain is said to have set the neighbouring mill-wheels a-going. Khalid ibn Sa'id himself was probably killed. He had just celebrated his wedding with the widow of 'Ikrima, who was killed at Ajnadain, and his bride is said to have joined in the fray and with a tent-post slain seven of the enemy. The date of the encounter is given as the first day (1st Moharram) of the year 14 A.H. (25th February 635).[3]

[1] The narrative of Seif (followed by Ibn al Athir) places this battle after the capture of Damascus.

[2] *Cf.* p. 62 ff. and p. 93.

[3] The date given by Seif (p. 63) is thus one year too early.

CHAPTER X

CAMPAIGN IN AL-ʿIRĀḲ — NEED OF REINFORCEMENTS. AL-MUTHANNA FINDS ABU BEKR ON HIS DEATHBED

FIRST HALF OF 13 A.H. MARCH-AUGUST 634 A.D.

Muthanna attacked by the Persians.

BEFORE he left for Syria, Khālid, seeing that with a diminished force the situation in Al-ʿIrāḳ would be somewhat insecure, sent away the sick with the women and children to their homes in Arabia. On his departure, Al-Muthanna made the best disposition in his power to strengthen the line of defences towards the Persian Capital. Fresh dangers threatened. A new Prince had succeeded to the throne, who thought to expel the invaders by an army under Hormuz 10,000 strong. Al-Muthanna at once called in the outlying garrisons; but with every help, his force was in numbers much below the Persian. The King, confident of victory, wrote to Al-Muthanna insultingly, that "he was about to drive him away by an army of fowl-men and swine-herds." Al-Muthanna answered: "Thou art either a braggart or a liar. But if this be true, then blessed be the Lord that hath reduced thee to such defenders!" Having despatched this reply, he advanced to meet Hormuz. Leaving Al-Ḥira, the little force crossed the Euphrates and encamped north of the shapeless mounds that mark the site of Babylon. There, some fifty miles from the Capital, he chose the battle-ground; and, placing his two brothers in charge of either wing, himself at the head of the centre, awaited thus the attack of Hormuz. The Persian line was headed by an elephant, which threw the Arab ranks into confusion, and for a while paralysed their action. Al-Muthanna, followed by an adventurous band, surrounded the great creature and brought it to the ground. Deprived

Battle of Babylon. Summer, 13 A.H. 634 A.D.

A.H. 13.

of this help, the enemy gave way before the fierce onslaught of the Arabs, who pursued the fugitives to the very gates of Al-Medain. The praises of the "Hero of the Elephant" have been handed down in Arab verse.

Muthanna asks Abu Bekr for reinforcements.

The King did not long survive his defeat. His son succeeding him was killed in a rebellion caused by the attempt to give a Princess of the royal blood in marriage to a favourite Minister. The Princess, saved from dishonour, succeeded to the throne. From a Court weakened thus by continual change and treachery, there was little, one might think, to fear, but Al-Muthanna had to guard a frontier of great extent, and for the task his army was inadequate. The inhabitants were, at the best, indifferent; the Syrian Bedawin distinctly hostile. Victories might be won, but could not be followed up. The position, with so small a force, was full of risk. Accordingly, Al-Muthanna urged upon the Caliph the pressing need of reinforcements. He also pointed out the ease with which they might be raised: "Remove the embargo from the apostate but now repentant tribes," he wrote; "they will flock to the war, and none more brave or eager." Answer being long delayed, Al-Muthanna ventured to Medina, there to urge his suit in person. He found Abu Bekr on his deathbed. The aged Caliph knew that his end was near; but the mind was clear, and he at once perceived the urgency of the appeal. "Call 'Omar to me," he said (for he had already named him his successor); and then addressed him thus:—"Command a levy for Al-Muthanna. Tarry not. If I die, as I may, this day, wait not till the evening; if I linger on to night, wait not till the morning. Let not sorrow for me divert thee from this service of the Lord. Ye saw what I myself did when the Prophet died (and there could be no greater sorrow for mankind than that); truly if grief had stayed me then from girding my loins in the cause of the Lord and of His Prophet, the Faith had fared badly; the flame of rebellion had been surely kindled in the city. And, list thee, 'Omar! when the Lord shall have given victory in Syria, then send back to Al-'Irak its army: for they are the proper garrison thereof, and fittest to administer it."

Abu Bekr on his deathbed desires 'Omar to order levy.

'Omar accepts the charge.

'Omar was touched by the delicacy of these last words, and the allusion they contained; "For," said he, "Abu Bekr

knew that it grieved me when he gave the command to Khālid; therefore he bade me to send back his army to Al-'Irak, but forbore to name the name of Khalid or bid me send him back." He listened attentively to the dying Caliph's words, and promised to fulfil them. A.H. 13.

CHAPTER XI

DEATH OF ABU BEKR

AUGUST 13 A.H. 634 A.D.

Abu Bekr presides over Pilgrimage, xii. 12 A.H. February 634.

AT the first yearly pilgrimage, Abu Bekr had been hindered by the pressure of rebellion from the journey to Mecca; but the following year he presided at the solemnity himself. As the party entered Mecca, the Citizens hastened to tell the Caliph's father, who, blind from great age, was sitting at his door. On his son's approach, the old man arose to greet him. Abu Bekr made the camel on which he rode kneel down at the threshold, and alighting, embraced his father, who shed tears of delight, and kissed him between the eyes. The Governor and other chief men of Mecca approached and shook the Caliph by the hand. Then they did obeisance to him and to his father also, who said: "These be our nobles; honour them, my son, and make much of them." "Make much of them," answered Abu Bekr,—"that I do; but (mindful of his Master's teaching) as for honour, there is none save that which cometh from the Lord alone." After bathing, he went forth in pilgrim garb, to kiss the Black Stone, and encompass the Holy House. The People crowded round him; and as they made mention of the Prophet, Abu Bekr wept. It was but two years since Mohammad had been amongst them, celebrating the same rites. How much of danger and deliverance had come to pass in that short space! And so they mourned his loss. At midday, he again went through the ceremonies of the Ka'ba; then, sitting down under the shadow of the Hall of Assembly, he commanded the Citizens that, if any had complaint to make, he should speak it out. All were silent; so he praised the people and their Governor. Then he arose and celebrated the midday

prayer. After a little, he bade them all farewell, and again departed for Medīna. A.H. 13.

During the summer, Abu Bekr was busied with reinforcements for the Syrian campaign. Simple and temperate in habit, he was now, though over threescore years, hale and hearty. In the autumn, bathing incautiously on a cold day, fever laid him low and obliged him to make over the presidency at public prayer to 'Omar. When the illness had lasted a fortnight, his friends became anxious, and said: "Shall we send for a physician?" "The Physician hath been to me already," was the solemn answer. "And what said he?" "He saith to me, *I am about to do that with thee which I purpose to do.*" They understood his meaning, and were silent. Aware that the end was near, he made preparation for a successor. The choice was fixed on 'Omar; but willing to fortify his own conviction by that of others, he first consulted 'Abd ar-Rahman, one of the Prophet's foremost councillors, who praised 'Omar as the fittest man, but withal inclined to be severe. "Which," responded the dying Caliph, "is because he saw me soft and tender-hearted. When himself Master, he will forego much of what thou sayest. I have watched him. If I were angry with one, he would intercede in his behalf; if over lenient, then he would be severe." 'Othman, too, confirmed the choice;—"What is hidden of 'Omar," said he, "is better than that which doth appear; there is not his equal amongst us." Talha, on the other hand, expostulated: "If we have suffered so much from 'Omar, thou being yet with us, what will it be when thou art gone to thy Lord, there to answer for having left his people to the care of so hard a master?" "Set me up," cried the Caliph, much excited; "seekest thou to frighten me? I swear that when I meet my Lord, I will say unto Him, 'I have appointed as ruler over Thy people him that is the best amongst them.'" Falls sick, vi. 13 A.H. Aug. 634 A.D.

Thereupon Abu Bekr called for 'Othman, and dictated an ordinance appointing 'Omar his successor. He fainted while it was being written. Recovering, he bade 'Othman to read it over. Satisfied now, he praised the Lord; "for," said he, "I saw thee apprehensive lest, if I passed away, the people had been left in doubt." Upon this, he desired the ordinance to be read in the hearing of the Citizens, who had Appoints 'Omar his successor.

A.H. 13. assembled in the court of the Mosque. 'Omar himself was present, and hushed the noise, that they might hear. Then, desiring to obtain their assent, the dying Caliph bade his wife Asma raise him to the window (for the Caliph's house looked out upon the Court); so she bore him, in her tattooed arms, to the window, from whence, with a great effort, he called out: "Are ye satisfied with him whom I have appointed over you? None of mine own kin, but 'Omar son of Al-Khattab. Verily I have done my best to choose the fittest. Wherefore, ye will obey him loyally." The people answered with one voice, "Yea, we will obey."

To the end, Abu Bekr's mind was clear and vigorous. On his last day he gave audience (as we have seen) to Al-Muthanna, and, grasping the crisis, commanded 'Omar to raise, with all despatch, a levy for Al-'Irak. During his illness, 'Āisha repeated verses from a heathen poet supposed to be appropriate. Abu Bekr was displeased, and said: "Not so; say rather" (quoting from the Kor'an—"*Then the agony of death shall come in truth. This, O man, is what thou soughtest to avoid.*"[1] His last act was to summon 'Omar to his bedside, and counsel him at great length to temper severity with mildness. Shortly after, he expired with these words on his lips:—"Lord, let me die a true believer, and make me to join the blessed ones on high!"

His death 22nd vi. 13 A.H. 23rd Aug. 634 A.D.,

and burial.

Abu Bekr had reigned but two years and three months. According to his express desire, the body was laid out by the loving hands of Asma. He was wound in the clothes in which he died; "for," said he, "new clothes befit the living, but old the mouldering body." The same Companions that bore the Prophet's bier, now bore that of Abu Bekr: and they laid him in the same grave, the Caliph's head close by his Master's shoulder. 'Omar performed the funeral service, praying, as was customary, over the bier. The funeral procession had not far to go; it had only to cross the open court of the Sanctuary; for Abu Bekr died in the house appointed him by Mohammad opposite his own.[2]

Character. Simple life at As-Sunh.

During the greater part of his reign, he had occupied that house. For six months, indeed, after Mohammad's death, he continued to live partly as before in As-Sunh, a suburb of Upper Medina.[3] There he inhabited a simple

[1] Sūra l. 18. [2] *Life of Mohammad*, p. 172. [3] *Ibid.* p. 169.

dwelling with the family of the wife whom he married on coming to Medina, and who shortly after his death gave birth to a daughter. Every morning he rode or walked to the courtyard of the Mosque where Mohammad lived and ruled, to discharge the business of the day, and to perform the Public prayers, 'Omar presiding if he were absent. For the more important service of Friday, at which an address also was delivered, he stayed in the early hours at home to dye his hair and beard, and dress more carefully; and so did not appear till midday prayer. Here, as elsewhere, he preserved the severe simplicity of early life, and even fed and milked the household goats. At the first he continued to maintain himself by merchandise; but perceiving that it interfered with the burdens of the State, he consented to forego all other occupation, and to receive instead a yearly allowance of six thousand dirhems for household charge. A.H. 13.

Finding the Sunh too distant from the Mosque where, as in the time of Mohammad, public affairs were all transacted, he transferred his residence thither. The Exchequer was in those days but simple. It needed neither guard nor office of account. The tithes as they came in were given to the poor, or spent on military equipage and arms; the spoil of war also was distributed just as received, or on the following morning. Ali shared alike, the recent convert and the veteran, male and female, bond and free. As claimant on the Muslim treasury, every believing Arab was his brother's equal. When urged to recognise precedence in the faith as ground of preference, Abu Bekr would reply, "That is for the Lord; He will fulfil the reward of such, in the world to come. These gifts are but an accident of the present life." After his death, 'Omar had the treasury opened; they found but a solitary golden piece, slipped out of the bags; so they lifted up their voices and wept, and blessed the departed Caliph's memory. His conscience had troubled him for taking even what he did by way of stipend from the People's chest; and on his deathbed he gave command that certain lands, his private property, should be sold and a sum equal to that received, refunded. Removes to the great Mosque.

In disposition Abu Bekr was singularly mild and gentle. 'Omar used to say there was no man for whom the people would more readily have laid down their lives. He had long Mild and gentle.

A.H. 13.

been called "the Sighing" because of his tender-heartedness. He was severe in his treatment of the Apostate tribes; but excepting the solitary case in which he committed a brigand to the flames, no act of cruelty stands out against him; and for that he expressed his sorrow. "It was one of the three things which he would wish undone." The others were, that he had pardoned Al-Ashrath when he deserved death; and that when Khalid was transferred to Syria, he had not at the same time sent 'Omar to Al-'Irak. "Then," said he, "I should have stretched out mine arms, both the right hand and the left, in the ways of the Lord."

Wives and family.

Unlike his Master, he contented himself with but few wives. Two he had at Mecca before conversion. On arrival at Medina, he married the daughter of a Citizen; and, later on, Asmá, the widow of Ja'far, 'Ali's brother, slain at Muta. By all he left issue. There is no mention of any other wives, nor of any slave-girls in his harim. Of his children, he loved 'Áisha best and, in proof thereof, gave her a property for her own. On his deathbed, troubled at the seeming partiality, he said to her, "I wish thee, my daughter, to return that property, to be divided with the rest of the inheritance amongst you all, not forgetting the one yet unborn." His father survived him six months, reaching the great age of ninety-seven.

Simple, diligent, wise, and impartial.

At his court, Abu Bekr maintained the same simple and frugal life as Mohammad. Guards and servitors there were none, nor anything approaching pomp and circumstance. Diligent in business, he leaned upon 'Omar as his counsellor, whose judgment had such weight, that he might even be said to have shared the government with him. Abu Bekr never spared himself, and he personally descended to the minutest things. Thus, he would sally forth by night to seek for the destitute and oppressed. 'Omar found him one night inquiring into the affairs of a poor blind widow, whom 'Omar had himself gone forth to help. The department of justice was made over to 'Omar, but for a whole year "hardly two suitors came before him." The seal of State bore the legend, *God the best of Potentates*. The despatches were chiefly indited by 'Ali. Abu Bekr made use also of Zeid (the amanuensis of the Prophet and compiler of the Kor'an) and of 'Othman, or any other penman who might at

the moment be at hand. In the choice of agents for high office or command, he was altogether free from partiality, wise and discerning in his estimate of character. A.H. 13.

But he had not 'Omar's strength and decision; nor was his sense of justice so keen and stern. This is illustrated in the matter of the two Khālids. Upon the one, though warned by 'Omar and 'Alī, he was prevailed upon, according to Seif, to confer a command; the disaster in Syria was the consequence. Again, by refusing to condemn the other Khālid for injustice, cruelty, and the scandal of marrying Ibn Nuweira's widow, he became responsible for his evil deeds. Yet to this unscrupulous agent—well named *The Sword of God*—was due, more than to any other, the survival and the triumph of Islām. But Abu Bekr was not wanting in firmness when stern occasion called; for example, the despatch of Usāma's army when Medina lay defenceless and all around was dark, showed a boldness and steadfastness of purpose that, more than anything else, helped to roll back the tide of rebellion and apostasy. Not so strong as 'Omar.

Abu Bekr had no thought of personal aggrandisement. Endowed with sovereign and irresponsible power, he used it simply for the interests of Islām and the people's good. But the grand secret of his strength was faith in Mohammad. "Call me not *the Caliph of the Lord*," he would say, "I am but *the Caliph of the Prophet of the Lord*." The question with him ever was, What did Mohammad command? or, What now would he have done? From this he never swerved a hair's-breadth. And so it was that he crushed Apostasy and laid secure the foundations of Islām. His reign was short, but, after Mohammad himself, there is no one to whom the Faith is more beholden. Faith in Mohammad, secret of his strength.

For this reason, and because his belief in the Prophet is itself a strong evidence of the sincerity of Mohammad himself, I have dwelt at some length upon his life and character. Had Mohammad begun his career a conscious impostor, he never could have won the faith and friendship of a man who was not only sagacious and wise, but throughout his life simple, consistent, and sincere. Evidence of Mohammad's sincerity.

CHAPTER XII

ACCESSION OF 'OMAR — REINFORCEMENTS FOR AL-'IRĀḲ. CAMPAIGN UNDER ABU 'OBEID AND AL-MUTHANNA

AUGUST TO MARCH 13-14 A.H. 634-635 A.D.

'Omar's accession, vi. 13 A.H. Aug. 634 A.D.

ON the morrow after Abu Bekr's death, 'Omar ascended the pulpit, and addressed the people assembled in the Mosque. "The Arabs," he said, "are like a rebellious camel, and it pertaineth to the driver which way to lead it. By the Lord of the Ka'ba!—even thus will I guide you in the way that ye should go."

Fresh levies for 'Irāḳ.

The first act of the new Caliph was, in fulfilment of Abu Bekr's dying behest, to raise a fresh levy for Al-Muthanna. A standard was accordingly planted in the Court of the Mosque, and urgent proclamation made for soldiers to rally round it. Then followed the oath of fealty to 'Omar, taken by all who were in and around the City. Meanwhile, so great a fear of Persian prowess had fallen on the people, that none responded to the call. Seeing this, Al-Muthanna, who was still at Medina, harangued them in a stirring speech. He told them of his victories, the endless plunder, the fair captives, and the fruitful fields of which they had already spoiled the enemy; "and the Lord," he added, "waiteth but to give the rest into your hands." Inflamed by his discourse, and stung by reproaches from 'Omar, men began at last to offer. The first to come forward was Abu 'Obeid, a citizen of At-Taif; then, following him, numbers crowded to the standard. When a thousand were thus gathered, they said to 'Omar: "Now choose thee, either from Ḳoreish or from the men of Medina, one of the chiefest to be our commander." "That I will not," replied the Caliph; "wherein lies the glory of a Companion but in this, that

he is the first to rally round the Prophet? But now ye are backward; ye come not to the help of the Lord. Such as be forward to bear the burden, whether light or whether heavy, have the better claim. Verily I will give the command to none other but to him that first came forth." Then turning to Abu 'Obeid: "I appoint thee over this force, because thou wast the first to offer; and in eagerness for battle is the Arab's glory." With this emphatic declaration, he presented to him the standard; but, at the same time, earnestly enjoined upon him ever to take counsel with the other Companions and associate them with himself in the conduct of affairs. So the force started for Al-'Irāḳ. Now also 'Omar removed the ban against the employment of the once Apostate tribes, and bade Abu 'Obeid to summon to his standard all, without distinction, who since their apostasy had made a good profession. Al-Muthanna, with lightened heart, hastened back in advance of Abu 'Obeid, and re-entered Al-Ḥira after the absence of a month.

A.H. 13-14.

Abu 'Obeid appointed commander.

During this period further changes were transpiring at the unhappy Court of Persia. Prince and Princess succeeded one another amidst bloodshed and rebellion, till at last a royal lady, Būrān, summoned the famous Rustem from Khorāsan, and by his aid established herself upon the throne. Proclaimed supreme, the energy of Rustem was soon felt. The nobles rallied round him; great landholders rose against the invaders, and the whole country speedily cast off the Arabian yoke. Two columns were despatched from Al-Medāin, one under Jabān to cross the Euphrates and advance on Al-Ḥira; the other under Narsa to occupy Kaskar on the nearer side. The people flocked to their standard, and the position of the Muslims grew precarious.

Rustem rouses Persia against the invaders.

Al-Muthanna called in his forces, still all too few, abandoned Al-Ḥira to the enemy, and falling back on the desert road to Medina, there awaited Abu 'Obeid. But he had some time to wait. Swelled by Bedawi tribes on the way, and burdened by their families, it was a month before he came up. After a few days' repose, Abu 'Obeid took command of the combined force, and attacking Jabān, put him to flight. Then crossing the Euphrates, he surprised Narsa, strongly posted by a royal date-grove near Kaskar, routed his army and took his camp, in which, with much

Abu 'Obeid's victory over the Persians, viii. 13 A.H. Oct. 634 A.D.

A.H. 13-14. spoil, was great store of rare dates reserved for royal use. These were distributed among the army, as common food for all. With the fifth, Abu 'Obeid sent some of them to 'Omar: "Behold," he wrote, "the fruit wherewith the Lord hath fed us, eaten only by the kings of Persia; wilt thou see the same with thine own eyes, taste it with thine own lips, and praise the Lord for His goodness in giving us royal food to eat?" The unfortunate Delta, prey to alternate conquest and defeat, again acknowledged Muslim sway. The neighbouring Chiefs brought in their tribute and, in proof of loyalty, made a feast of good things for Abu 'Obeid. He declined to partake of it, unless shared equally with his soldiers. A further supply was furnished, and the army sat down with him to the repast.

Bahman advances against Abu 'Obeid.

Enraged at the defeat, Rustem assembled a still larger force under another great warrior, Bahman. The Imperial banner of panthers' skins was unfurled, and an array of elephants sent with the army. Before this imposing host, the Arabian army again fell back and, recrossing the Euphrates, took up ground on the western bank. Bahman encamped on the opposite shore. The field of battle was not far from Babylon, and a bridge of boats spanned the river. Bahman gave Abu 'Obeid the option of crossing unopposed, and thus of choosing either bank for the impending action. His advisers sought to dissuade him from quitting their more advantageous ground. But Abu 'Obeid made it a point of honour;—"Shall we fear death more than they?" he cried, as he gave the order at once to cross. They found the ground upon the farther side confined; and, though they were under 10,000, there was little room to manœuvre, and nothing but the bridge to fall back upon. The unwieldy elephants, with jingling bells and barbaric trappings, spread confusion among the Arab cavalry. The riders, however, dismounting, went bravely at them, and tried, with some success, to cut the bands of the litters, and drive them from the field. Abu 'Obeid himself singled out the fiercest, a white elephant with great tusks, and rushed at it sword in hand. Vainly endeavouring to reach some vulnerable part, the huge beast caught him with its trunk, and trampled him to death. Consternation seized the ranks at the horrid spectacle. One after

A.H. 13-14.

Battle of the Bridge. Abu 'Obeid slain and defeated, viii. 13 A.H. Oct. 634 A.D.

another, the captains whom Abu 'Obeid had named to take command in case of disaster, were slain, and the troops began to waver. Just then a soldier, appalled at the fate of his leaders, ran to the bridge, and crying,—*Die, as your Chiefs have died, or conquer*,—cut the first boat adrift. Retreat closed, the panic spread. The Muslims, hemmed in, were driven back upon the river. Many leapt into the deep swift stream, but few reached the other shore. At this eventful moment Al-Muthanna rushed to the front. Backed by a few heroic spirits, among them a Christian chief of the Beni Ṭai, he seized the banner and, planting himself between the enemy and the bewildered Arabs, called out that he would hold the ground till all had passed over. Then he chided the author of the calamity, and commanded the bridge to be restored. "Destroy not your own selves," he cried; "retire in order, and I will defend you." While thus bravely holding the Persians at bay, the thrust of a lance imbedded the rings of his armour in a deep and dangerous wound. Heedless of it, he stood to his ground, endeavouring to calm the panic-stricken force, but in vain. The confusion increased, and before order could be restored, vast numbers had perished in the river. At last, the bridge repaired, a remnant escaped across; but 4000 were swept off by the flood, left dead upon the field, or borne wounded away. Of the new levies, some 2000, stung with remorse, fled from the terrible field back to Arabia; and Al-Muthanna, again assuming the command, was left with only 3000 of his men. After the battle, Bahman was on the point of crossing the river to follow up his victory. Had he done so, it would have fared badly with Al-Muthanna and the disheartened remnants still holding their ground on the opposite bank. But fortunately at the moment, news reached Bahman of a revolt at Al-Medáin; and so, relinquishing his design, he hastened away to the distracted capital. Al-Muthanna fell back upon Ulleis, farther down the river, and fixing headquarters there, bravely defended his early conquests amongst a people now not unfriendly to the Muslim cause. Jaban, unaware of Bahman's hasty recall, fell into Al-Muthanna's hands and, with his followers, was beheaded. Things, no doubt, looked dark; but a hero like Al-Muthanna was not one to despair.

Muthanna retires with remnant to Ulleis.

A.H. 13-14.

As on his first advance, so now he sought to recruit the diminished ranks from kindred tribes about him; and, before long, regained a firmer footing.

'Omar's calm reception of the tidings.

'Omar received with calmness the unhappy tidings. Abu 'Obeid's levies kept on their flight till they reached home; and some who belonged to Medina returning thither, covered their faces with shame. The Caliph spoke comfortably to them thus:—"Verily, I am a defence to every believer that faceth the enemy, even if trouble overtake him. The Lord have mercy on Abu 'Obeid, and be gracious unto him. Had he survived, and taken refuge on some sandy mound, I surely would have been his advocate and his defender." Mo'adh, famous as a reciter of the Kor'an, was among those who fled. Shortly after, in the course of public recitation, he came to the verse: "Whosoever in the field shall give his back to the enemy (excepting again to join in battle), or shall turn aside unto another party, verily he draweth the wrath of God upon himself; his refuge shall be hell-fire—an ill ending!"[1] and he lifted up his voice and wept. 'Omar addressed him kindly: "Weep not, O Mo'adh, thou hast not *turned aside unto another party*; thou hast turned aside to none but unto me." Such was the spirit of these Muslim heroes, even in defeat. The reverse had no other effect than to nerve the Caliph to redoubled effort. The fresh cry for a levy *en masse* soon resounded all over the Peninsula. But reinforcements in response would have been too late to help Al-Muthanna if (fortunately for Islam) earlier succour had not reached him.

Summons for a fresh levy.

Numerous reinforcements join Muthanna,

For the previous call was still drawing. Levies from every quarter daily reached Medina, eager—now the ban against Apostasy was removed—to show the sincerity of their repentance, and share in the rewards of victory. Each band as it came, besought 'Omar to send them to the favoured land of Syria. But the late victories in Syria had made him easy in that direction; and every available man must now be hurried forward to Al-'Irak. A brave levy raised under the banner of Jarir, urged that their ancestral relations were all with Syria; but 'Omar was firm, and at last reconciled them to set out at once for Persia by the promise that they should have one-fourth of all the royal fifth of

[1] Sūra viii. 16.

booty taken there. The fugitives also hastened back, seeking to retrieve their honour. But the most remarkable was a Christian tribe of the desert, which, without detriment to their faith, threw in their lot with the Muslims, and brought a contingent to their help. Thus rapidly reinforced, Al-Muthanna was soon stronger than ever, and ready for offensive movement. His troops were massed at first on the edge of the Arabian desert, near Khaffân. The women and children (for the practice was now common of carrying with the army house and home) were placed in security at a distance behind; some were even left with friendly citizens in Al-Hira, although, since the last retreat, the city had been reoccupied by a Persian Satrap. Al-Muthanna had also a trusty follower in hiding there, to give him notice of what was passing in the City. A.H. 13-14.

From the spy, Al-Muthanna now learned that, matters having been settled at the Capital, a great army was in motion against him. Sending an urgent message to Jarir, now close at hand, to hurry on, he marched forward to Al-Buweib on the western branch of the Euphrates and there, close by the future site of Al-Kufa, and on ground approached by a bridge, awaited the enemy. 'Omar had cautioned him not again to risk his men by crossing the river before victory was secure; so he suffered the enemy undisturbed to defile their troops across the bridge. The Persians advanced in three columns, an elephant defended by a company of footmen at the head of each, and all with tumult and barbaric din. It was the fast of Ramadân; but under special dispensation the troops had been strengthened by a full repast. Al-Muthanna, on his favourite charger (humorously called *the Rebel*, from its docility in action), rode along the lines, and exhorted his soldiers to quit them like men: "Your valour this day shall be a proverb. Be still as death, and if ye speak one to the other, speak it in a whisper. None amongst us shall give way this day. I desire not glory for myself, but glory for you all." And they answered him in like words; for he was beloved by his men. who advances against Persian army.

The signal was to be the Tekbir, or cry of *God is most great*, repeated thrice; then, at the fourth, the general advance. But Al-Muthanna had barely shouted the first, Battle of Buweib, ix. 13 A.H. Nov. 634 A.D.

A.H. 13-14. when the Persian myrmidons bore down; and the nearest column broke before them. Al-Muthanna pulled his beard in trouble. Calling an officer, he bade him hasten with this message to the wavering corps: "The Amir sendeth greeting, and saith, *Ye will not this day shame the Muslim!*" They gave answer, "Yea, we will not!" And, as the broken ranks closed again in serried line, Al-Muthanna smiled approvingly. The battle raged long and equally. At last, Al-Muthanna, seeing that a desperate onset must be made, rode up to the Christian chief, and said: "Ye are one blood with us: come now, and as I charge, charge ye with me." The Persian centre quivered before the fierce onslaught, and as the dust cleared off it was seen to be giving way. The Muslim wings hitherto outflanked, now took heart, and charged. Then the Persian army fell back, and made for the bridge. Al-Muthanna, however, swept before, and cut them off. In despair, they turned on their pursuers. But the fiery zeal of the Arabs, though a handful in comparison, beat back the forlorn charge. "The enemy," says an eye-witness, "driven before us, were brought up by the river and finding no escape, re-formed and charged again. One cried to our Leader to hold his banner back; *My work*, he answered, *is to move the banner on.* So forward we drove, and cut them up, not one reaching even to the river bank." Al-Muthanna reproached himself afterwards with having closed the bridge, and caused useless loss of his men. "I made a grievous error," he confessed; "follow not my example herein; it behoveth us not to close the way against such as may be driven to turn upon us in despair." The carnage was almost unparalleled even in the annals of Islám, and it went on into the night. A hundred warriors boasted that they slew each ten men to his lance; hence the battle has been called *The field of Tens.* No engagement left marks wider or more lasting. For ages bones of the slain bleached the plain; and the men of Al-Kufa had here, at their very door, lasting proof at once of the prowess and the mercilessness of the first invaders.

Enemy routed with terrible carnage.

Victory helped by Christian Arabs.

The victory is remarkable as gained in part by the valour of a Christian tribe. And yet further, the most gallant feat of the day was achieved by one of another Christian clan; for a party of Bedawi merchants with a

string of horses for sale, arriving just as the ranks were being dressed, threw themselves into the battle on the Arab side. A youth from amongst them darting into the centre of the Persians, slew the leader Mihran, and leaping on his richly caparisoned horse, rode back crying, as he passed in triumph amidst the plaudits of the Muslim line: "I am of the Beni Taghlib. I am he that hath slain the Chief." A.H. 13-14.

The loss on the Muslim side was considerable. Al-Muthanna mourned the death of a brother who, when borne from the field mortally wounded, cried: "Exalt your banners ye Beni Bekr, and the Lord will exalt you, my men; let not my fall disturb you!" The Christian chieftain met a similar fate. Al-Muthanna affectionately tended the last moments of both—the Christian and the Muslim—an unwonted sight on these fanatic fields. He performed the funeral service over his brother and the other fallen Muslims, and said in his panegyric: "It assuageth my grief that they stood stedfast; they yielded not a step; and now here they lie, the Martyrs of Al-Buweib." Muslim loss.

The spoil was great. Immense stores of grain and herds of cattle were captured. Supplies were sent to the families in their retreat; but as the convoy rode up, the women mistaking it for a hostile raid, rushed out with their wild Arab scream, and attacked it with stones and staves. The Leader soon made himself known, and praised their courageous bearing. "It well becometh the wives of such an army," he said, "thus to defend themselves." Then he told of the victory; "and lo," pointing to the stores of grain, "the first-fruits thereof!" The spoil.

The country was now ravaged without let or hindrance to the very walls of Al-Medain. The enemy's garrisons were driven back; and lower Mesopotamia and the Delta occupied anew. Parties scoured the country higher up, and many rich markets were ransacked. They penetrated to Baghdad (then a mere village on the Tigris), and even as far north as Tekrit. Great booty was gathered in these plundering expeditions, to be divided in the usual way. Country reoccupied.

Al-Muthanna lived but a few months after his last great victory. He never entirely recovered from his wounds received at the battle of the Bridge, and eventually succumbed. His merits have not been recognised as they

A.H. 13-14. deserve. That he did not belong to the Nobility of Islam was the misfortune which kept him in the background. Jarir declined to serve under him, a common Bedawi like himself,—not even a Companion of the Prophet; and complained accordingly to the Caliph. 'Omar, as we shall see, listened to the appeal, and eventually appointed another Commander over both. But before entering on a new chapter in the Persian war, we must revert in our next to the course of events in Syria.

Muthanna. The character of Al-Muthanna, however, deserves more than a passing notice. Among the generals who secured the triumph of Islam, he was second only to one. Inferior to Khalid in dash and brilliancy of enterprise, he did not yield to him in vigour and strategic skill. Free from the unscrupulous cruelty of that great Leader, we never hear of his using victory to gratify private ends. It was due alone to the cool and desperate stand which Al-Muthanna made at the Bridge, that the Muslim force was not utterly annihilated there; while the formation so rapidly afterwards of a fresh army by which, with the help of Christian tribes (rare mark of Muslim liberality in contrast with the bigotry of later days) a prodigious host was overthrown, showed powers of administration and generalship far beyond his fellows. The repeated supersession of Al-Muthanna cost the Caliphate much, and at one time even rendered the survival of Islam in Al-'Irak doubtful; but it never affected his loyalty to 'Omar. The sentiment of the day may have rendered it difficult for the Caliph to place a Bedawi of obscure origin in command of men who as Companions, had fought under the Prophet's very banner. But it is strange that no historian, jealous for the honour of the heroes of Islam, has regretted the supersession of one so distinguished in its annals, or sought to give Al-Muthanna his deserved place as one of the great Generals of the world.

CHAPTER XIII

CAMPAIGN IN SYRIA. TAKING OF DAMASCUS

13-14 A.H. 634-635 A.D.

Country east of the Jordan.

THE country in which the Muslims were now encamped,—"the land beyond Jordan on the east,"—differed from any they had previously known. Away to the south were the pastoral tracts of the Belḳā, and again to the north of these the pasture-lands of Jaulan. Between the two lay the hills and dales of Gilead, with fields of wheat and barley, dotted here and there with clumps of shady oak, olive, and sycamore, and thickets of arbutus, myrtle, and oleander. It was emphatically "a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains of depths that spring out of valleys and hills." The landscape, diversified with green slopes and glens, is in season gay with carpeting of flowers and melody of birds. From the green high lands above the Yarmuk may be descried the blue waters of the Sea of Galilee sparkling in the west, and away in the north the snow-capped peaks of Lebanon and Hermon;—striking contrast to the endless sands and stony plains of Arabia. Not less marked is the contrast with Chaldæa. There the marshy Delta displays a tropical luxuriance, while the plains abound with desolate sites of cities that flourished in early cycles of the world, strewn with fragments of pottery and bricks of strange device, mysterious records of bygone kingdoms. Here the pride of the Byzantine Empire was yet alive. Skirting the Jordan were busy cities founded by the Romans that boasted Church and Theatre and Forum. Even naval contests of the Naumachia might be witnessed in the land of Gilead. The country was populous and flourishing, inhabited by a mongrel race, half Arab, half Syrian, who aspired to the

A.H. 13-14.

privileges and aped the luxurious habits, without the chivalry or manliness, of the Roman citizen. It was altogether a civilisation of forced, and of exotic growth. No sooner was the western prop removed than the people returned to their Bedawi life, true sons of the desert: the chariot and waggon were banished for the camel; and nothing left of Roman rule but columns and peristyles, causeways and aqueducts, great masses of ruined masonry—which still startle the traveller as if belonging to another world. But, at the time we write of, the age of so-called civilisation was still dominant there. Such was the beautiful country, strange to the southern Arab both in natural feature and busy urban life, which was now traversed by the invading armies and soon became the beaten highway between Syria and the Muslim shrines.

Byzantine opposition faint in Syria.

The course of Muslim victory in Syria advanced with little let or hindrance. Persia's struggle was not for a limb, but for life itself. Here it was otherwise. Syria, indeed, contained the Holy Places, and what was dear to the Greeks as the cradle of their faith. But after all, it was, though fair and sacred, but an outlying province of which a supine and selfish Court could without vital injury afford the loss. There were no such mortal throes in Syria as on the plains of Chaldæa.

Damascus.

Damascus, the most ancient city in the world, has ever since the days of Abraham survived through all vicissitudes, the Capital of Syria. The great plain on which it stands is watered by streams issuing from adjoining mountain ranges; and the beautiful groves and rich meadows around have named it (with more reason than the Chaldæan delta) the "Garden of the world." An *entrepôt* of commerce between the east and west, it has been from age to age with varying fortune, ever rich and populous. The city wall, twenty feet high and fifteen broad, still contains stones of cyclopean size that must have been builded in ages before our era. Over the gates and elsewhere there are turrets for defence, all of venerable structure. The traveller entering at the eastern gate may even in the present day pass through the narrow "street which is called Straight," as did St Paul 1800 years ago. The Cathedral of St John the Baptist still rears its great Dome, towering above all other buildings;

and besides it there were, at the time of which we write, fifteen churches in the City and its suburbs. Not long before, Damascus had suffered severely from the alternating fortunes of the Persian war; but had now, in great measure, recovered its prosperity. A.H. 13-14.

Such was the Capital of Syria, "Queen of Cities," which in all its radiance, surrounded far off by lofty mountains tipped with snow, now burst on the gaze of the Arab warriors. Some amongst them may perchance have visited it trading to the north; but as a whole, the army had heard of it only by report; and in beauty, richness, and repose, fancy could hardly have exceeded the scene now stretched before them. Damascus bursts in view of the invading army.

It was on the 16th of Moḥarram of the year 14—fifteen days after the reverse of Merj aṣ-Ṣoffar, that the siege of Damascus began, and it lasted, with variations of fortune, for six months. The Arabs had no skill or experience in the art of besieging walled towns; and Damascus was strongly fortified and, it seems, well provided with the means of resistance. The besiegers, on the other hand, were continually obliged to send out foraging parties to replenish their commissariat, as well as to repel attacks from parties of the enemy who attempted to relieve the City. At last Khālid had to summon to his aid Shurahbīl from the Jordan province, and 'Amr from "Palestine," and it was only as a result of treachery from within that the City was eventually taken. City invested, 16. I. 14 A.H. 13th March 635 A.D.

How little is certainly known about the history of Palestine at this time is shown by the fact that not even the name of the governor of Damascus during this memorable siege is certain. One authority calls him the Bishop, but without naming him; another states that he was Bahān; whilst a third calls him the patrician Nesṭas (Anastasius).

One of the numerous encounters between the besiegers and the relieving forces took place between Beit Lihya and Thaniyat al-'Oḳab, overlooking the City, some four leagues to the north-east. It was the crag on which Khalid had planted a flag on the occasion of his famous desert march. The relieving force retired by the easterly route, as being safer, to Emesa from which it had come. The Muslims pursued, but on their arrival at Emesa they found that the enemy had fled.

A.H. 13-14. The people of the town deserted by Heraclius, and astonished at the irresistible valour of the Muslims, remained passive spectators of events. The Muslims treated them well, and, in consequence, received from them supplies and forage. A colony of Muslims was founded upon the Orontes—the river which flows by Antioch, the town to which Heraclius had withdrawn. Whilst the army which was to sweep the invaders out of the bounds of the Empire was being organised, to Baanes the Armenian was committed the task of constantly harassing the Arabs, and so preventing, above all, the fall of Damascus. He is said to have driven back the Muslims from Emesa upon Damascus, and pitched his camp on the banks of the River of Damascus—the often-mentioned Baradà, the Abana of the Old Testament, within sight of the City—only, however, to retire again upon Emesa. The Muslims built a fort at Berza, the reputed birthplace of Abraham, at the foot of Jebel Kâsiyûn, about a league to the north of the City, in order to protect the besiegers from attack in that direction. An advanced post, under the brave Himyari Dhu'l-Kelâ', is said also to have been established at the Thaniyat al-'Okâb, where the tracks leading to Damascus and to the Euphrates divide.

As regards the disposition of the Muslim forces before the town, Khalid's division was stationed to the east side, in such a way that his left wing faced the East Gate, at the extremity of the "street called Straight," whilst his centre lay between this gate and that of St Thomas, on what is now the great cemetery. Reminiscences of the siege are, it is true, to be found upon the north side also; there is the convent of Khalid, half a league outside the Gate of Paradise, Bâb al-Faradis; this gate itself bears traces of fire, which may date from this time; and it is sometimes at the present day called Bâb al-Karâdis—perhaps from the heap of corpses On the other hand, the East Gate is the best preserved of all the gates of Damascus.

Capitulation. The divisions of Abu 'Obeida faced the Gate of Jâbiya or West Gate, and that of Yezid the Bâb as-Saghir or "Little Gate" at the south-west angle of the wall, or the stretch of wall between it and the Bâb Kaisân at the south-east. The camp of 'Amr is said to have been pitched opposite the Bâb Tûmâ, or Gate of St Thomas, at the

north-east angle; and that of Shurahbīl near a gate called the River Gate which must have opened on the Baradà—probably the Gate of Paradise just mentioned. The City was thus completely surrounded, and skirmishes and sorties were of no avail to break through the cordon of hostile camps. The only hope of rescue was from without. But help, in spite of many valiant attempts, did not come; and after six months of investment, the Muslims entered the City from two points at the same moment. On one side they forced an entrance by assault, only to find that the Governor had capitulated and admitted their comrades-in-arms at the other. The two divisions met either in the Bazaar of the Coppersmiths or in that of the Oil Merchants, and here, after some disputation between the two parties, it was decided that the capitulation should hold good for the whole town. The treaty was drawn up in a church called the Maxillāt, where that of St Mary now stands, at the meeting-place of the Bazaars; and the name which was inserted in it was that of Khālid ibn al-Welīd. It was the month of Rejeb (the seventh month) in the year 14. A.H. 13-14.

The terms of the treaty by which the Capital of Syria passed into the hands of the Muslims were as follows:— The Treaty.

"This is the treaty which Khalid the son of Al-Welīd deigns to make with the inhabitants of Damascus, upon his entry into this town. He secures to them their lives and goods, the retention of their churches and of the walls of their town. No house will be pulled down or taken away from its owner. This assures the alliance of God and the protection of His Prophet, of his Successor and of the Faithful."

Such is what appears to be the outline of the story of the taking of Damascus; but there are endless variants. These arise partly from the belief that the commander-in-chief was Abu 'Obeida, and that Khalid served under him as a volunteer, having, in fact, been removed from supreme command by 'Omar at the moment of his accession to the Caliphate; or that it was Khalid who took the eastern quarter of the City by storm only to find that Abu 'Obeida had granted terms, instead of the reverse of this being the case. Even down to the present day the Christian and Jewish quarters of Damascus form the eastern half of the

A.H. 13-14. City, whilst the western is inhabited by Muslims. This clearly points to the western side, that is, the one on which Abu 'Obeida and Yezid were encamped, being the one which was taken by assault. The opposite account may have arisen from the fact that up to the time of the Umeiyad Caliph Welid the *eastern* half of the great Church of St John was used by the Muslim population as a mosque, the western continuing to be used as a church; from which it was inferred that the eastern half of the City must have been taken by assault. Those who hold that Khalid was deprived of his command during the siege, explain the fact of his name appearing in the treaty, by supposing that Abu 'Obeida kept back 'Omar's letter until the City was taken, so that Khalid might have all the credit. The same story is told with the battle of the Yarmuk for its scene.

The treaty made between Khalid and the people of Damascus, securing to them, as it does, their churches, appears to be in contradiction to the fact that one half of the Church of St John, if not of other churches, was until the Umeiyad Caliph Welid used as a mosque. M. de Goeje thinks that this partial occupation may date from the following year, when Damascus had fallen again for a moment into the hands of the Greeks and was retaken by the Muslims.

It is difficult to account for the entrance of the two generals into the town from opposite sides, one peacefully and the other by force, unless one supposes, either that the governor made terms with the one because he perceived that the other was on the point of taking the place by force of arms: or that the forcible entrance of one of the generals was part of an arrangement in order to make the reddition appear inevitable in the eyes of Heraclius, and so save the traitor from deserved punishment.

CHAPTER XIV

YEZDEJIRD SUCCEEDS TO THE THRONE OF PERSIA. BATTLE OF AL-ḲĀDISĪYA

14 A.H. 635 A.D.

Yezdejird, king of Persia. End of 13 A.H. Dec. 634 A.D.

We left Al-Muthanna, after the great battle of Al-Buweib, ravaging at will the terror-stricken coasts of Chaldæa. But another wave of war was about to sweep over the unhappy land. A new movement was taking place at Al-Medāin. The Persian nobles, chafing under the weakness of Rustem and the feeble Queen, began to cry out that these were dragging the Empire down to ruin. The ladies of the Court assembled to search whether any king might not yet be discovered of the royal blood. And so Yezdejird was found, saved as a child from the massacre of Siroes, now a youth of twenty-one. He was placed upon the throne. Around the young King the nobles rallied loyally, and something was rekindled of ancient patriotic fire. Troops were gathered, Mesopotamia reoccupied, and the cities as far as Al-Ḥīra strongly garrisoned.

Revived military movement.

Muthanna again falls back.

The people returned to their allegiance; and Al-Muthanna, finding his diminished army unable to cope with the rising which in the Spring assumed such formidable dimensions, again withdrew behind the Euphrates to Dhu Ḳār. He sent an urgent message to 'Omar of the new perils threatening all around. The danger was met bravely by the Caliph. "I swear by the Lord," was his emphatic word, "that I will smite down the proud princes of Persia with the sword of the princes of Arabia." It was clearly impossible permanently to hold Mesopotamia while it was dominated

A.H. 14. by the Capital of Persia so close at hand. Al-Medáin must be taken at any cost, and a great army gathered for the purpose. Orders, more stringent than ever (as already told), went forth for a new and universal levy. "Haste hither," was the command sent everywhere, "hasten speedily!" And forthwith Arabia again resounded with the call to arms. The tribes from the south were to assemble before the Caliph at Medina; those lying northward,—the demand being urgent and time precious,—were to march straight to Al-Muthanna. So much arranged, 'Omar set out on the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. This accomplished, he repaired to the camp outside Medina, where the contingents as they came in were marshalled. There it was debated whether the Caliph, as he proposed, and as the people wished, should in person lead the army to Al-'Irák. The chief Companions were against it. Defeat, if 'Omar were on the field, might be fatal; seated at Medina, even at the worst, he could launch column after column on the enemy. 'Omar yielded; but the readiness he had thus shown to bear in his own person the heat and burden of the day, added new impulse to the movement.

'Omar orders another levy.

Goes on pilgrimage, xii. 13 A.H. Feb. 635 A.D.

Who now should be the leader of this great army in 'Iraḳ? Al-Muthanna and Jarír were but Bedawi chieftains. None but a Noble could take command of the proud tribes now flocking to the field. The matter was at the moment under discussion, when there came a despatch from Sa'd, the Caliph's lieutenant with the Beni Hawazin, reporting the levy of a thousand good lances from amongst that tribe. "Here is the man!" cried out the assembly. "Who?" asked the Caliph. "None but the *Ravening Lion*,"[1] was the answer,—"Sa'd, the son of Malik."[2] The choice was sealed by acclamation; and 'Omar at once summoned Sa'd. Converted at Mecca while yet a boy, the new Amir of Al-'Iraḳ was now forty years of age. He is known as "the first who drew blood in Islam," and was a noted archer in the Prophet's wars.[3] He took rank also as the nephew of Mohammad's mother. Short and dark, with large head and shaggy hair, Sa'd was brave, but not well-favoured. The Caliph gave him advice on the momentous issues of the

Sa'd appointed commander in 'Irāḳ.

[1] A play upon the name *Sa'd*, or "lion." [2] Málik is Abu Waḳḳáṣ.

[3] *Life of Moḥammad*, pp. 58, 63.

campaign, and warned him not to trust in his extraction. A.H. 14.
"The Lord," he said, "looketh to merit and good works, not to birth; for in His sight all men are equal." Admonished thus, Sa'd set out for Al-'Irāḳ with 4000 men, the first-fruits of the new levy. According to Arab custom, these marched now with their wives and children.

Sa'd with the new levies marches to Irāḳ.

As the levies kept coming in, 'Omar sent them on, one after another, to join Sa'd. The numbers swelling rapidly, embraced the chivalry of all Arabia. Ṭoleiḥa, the *quondam* prophet, now an exemplary believer, and 'Amr ibn Ma'dīkerib, went in command of their respective tribes; and 'Omar wrote that each alone was worth a thousand men. Al-Ash'ath, also, the apostate rebel of the south, now joined the army with a column of his tribe. In short, 'Omar "left not a single person of any note or dignity in the land, whether warrior, poet, orator, or chieftain, nor any man possessed of horse or weapons, but he sent him off to Al-'Irāḳ." Thus reinforced, Sa'd found himself at the head of 20,000 men, so that, with the column now on its way from Syria, the numbers were over 30,000,—by far the largest force yet mustered by the Arabs on the Chaldæan plain. The new levies, with the veterans of Al-Muthanna, drew together at Esh-Shureif on the borders of the desert, fifteen or twenty miles south of Al-Ḥīra.

Death of Muthanna, ii. 14 A.H. April 635.

Before Sa'd reached the appointed rendezvous, Al-Muthanna had passed away. His brother Al-Mo'anna was just returning from a mission to the Beni Bekr, whom the Court of Persia were endeavouring to gain over. He went out to meet Sa'd with intelligence of his having frustrated the attempt, as well as with the sad news of his brother's death. He delivered also Al-Muthanna's dying message to the new Commander, advising that the Arabs should hold to their ground on the confines of the desert. "Fight there the enemy," was his last behest;—"Ye will be the victors; and, even if worsted, ye will have the friendly desert wastes behind: there the Persians cannot enter, and from thence ye will again return to the attack." Sa'd, as he received the message, blessed the memory of the great General. He also made the bereaved family his special care; and, the more effectually to discharge the trust, in true Arab fashion, took to wife his widow Selma.

A.H. 14.

Sa'd marshals his troops,

The army was marshalled by Sa'd anew. Companies were formed of ten, each under a selected leader. Warriors of note were appointed to bear the standards. Columns and squadrons were made up by clans and tribes; and thus by clans and tribes they marched, and also went into the field of battle. Departments likewise were established for the several duties incident to military service. The chief commands were given to veterans who had fought under the Prophet's banner; for in this army there were no fewer than 1400 Companions, of whom ninety-nine had fought at Bedr. Following Al-Muthanna's counsel, now confirmed by 'Omar, Sa'd marched slowly to Al-'Odheib, still keeping to the border of the Desert. There he left the women and children protected by a party of horse, and advanced to Al-Kadisiya, a great plain washed on its farther side by the inland channel of the Euphrates already described, and bounded on the west by the Trench of Sapor (in those days a running stream) with the desert waste beyond. The plain was traversed by the highway from Arabia, which here crossed the river on a bridge of boats leading to Al-Hira, and thence across the Peninsula to Al-Medáin. Such was the field of battle which was shortly to settle the fate of Persia. Sa'd, keeping still to the western bank, fixed his headquarters at Kodeis, a small fortress overlooking the stream and a little way below the bridge. Here he encamped and waited patiently the movements of his enemy.

and encamps at Kādisiya, Summer 14 A.H.

The King, impatient, orders advance.

Rustem would have played the same waiting game as Sa'd, had not the King become impatient. The Arabs were making continual raids across the river into Mesopotamia. The castles of the nobles were attacked, and their grounds laid waste. The spring passed away, and the summer came; but with it no relief. Herds were driven from the pasture-lands, and frequent forays served at once to furnish the Muslim army with food and punish their faithless allies. The people grew clamorous; and the great landlords at last made it known that if help were delayed, they must go over to the enemy. Moved by their cries, Yezdejird turned a deaf ear to Rustem, and insisted on immediate advance.

Meanwhile, Sa'd kept up constant communication with

'Omar. When asked for a description of the camp,— "Al-Ḳādisiya," he told the Caliph, "lies between the Trench of Sapor and the river; in front is the deep stream, which on the left meanders through a verdant vale downwards from the town of Al-Ḥira; a canal leads in like direction to the lake of Najaf, and upon its margin stands the palace of the Khawarnaḳ. Our right is guarded by an impassable swamp, and our rear rests on the desert." 'Omar, satisfied with the report, enjoined vigilance and patience. But first, he said, Yezdejird must be summoned to embrace the Faith at the peril of his kingdom. With this commission, twenty warriors of commanding mien crossed the plain and presented themselves at the gates of Al-Medāin. As they were led to the royal presence, the rabble crowded round, and jeered at the rough habit of the Arabs, clad in striped stuff, and armed with rude weapons of the desert,—contrasting strangely with the courtly splendour of the regal city. "Look!" they cried, mocking, "look at the woman's distaff,"—a Bedawi bow slung over the shoulder,—little thinking of the havoc it was soon to make amongst their crowded ranks. As the chiefs entered the precincts, the prancing and champing of the beautiful steeds, and the wild bearing of the stalwart riders, struck awe into the heart of the King and his effeminate Nobles. Yezdejird demanded through an interpreter, wherefore, thus unprovoked, they dared invade his kingdom. One after another the Arabian spokesmen told him of the Prophet who had wrought a mighty change in their land, and of the blessings and obligations of Islam. "Embrace the Faith," they said, "and thou shalt be even as we; or, if thou wilt, pay tribute, and come under our protection; which things if thou refuse, the days of thy kingdom are numbered." The King replied contemptuously: "Ye are naught, ye are naught! hungry adventurers from a naked land; come, I will give you a morsel, and ye shall depart full and content." The Arabs replied in strong but modest words. "Thou speakest truth; we are but poor and hungry; yet will the Lord enrich and satisfy us; hast thou chosen the sword? then between us shall the sword decide." The King's wrath was kindled. "If it were not that ye are Ambassadors, ye should have

A.H. 14.

Sa'd gives 'Omar description of field.

Deputation summons Yezdejird to embrace Islām.

A.H. 14.

been put to death, all of you. Bring hither a clod of earth, and let the mightiest among them bear it as a burden from out the city gates." The Arabs embraced the happy augury. A stalwart horseman forthwith seized the load, mounted his charger, and bearing it, rode away. Rustem coming up just then, the King told him of the affront he had put upon the simple Arabs. "Simple!" cried Rustem, "it is thou that art simple"; and he sent in haste to get the burden back. But the horseman was already out of sight; hurrying back to Al-Kadisiya, he cast the clod before his Chief, and exclaimed, "Rejoice, O Sa'd! for, lo, the Lord hath given thee of the soil of Persia!"

Rustem with great army advances slowly,

Rustem could no longer delay. Elephants and men had been gathered from every quarter to swell the host, now 120,000 strong. Yet, notwithstanding, he marched slowly and unwillingly. The auguries, we are told, boded some great disaster. But he cherished the hope that the Arabs, pinched in their supplies, would break up suddenly and disappear; or that, wearied with suspense, they might be drawn from their strong position across the river. After great delay upon the road, he crossed the Euphrates below Babylon. Advancing then on Al-Hira, he chid the people for siding with the Arabs; but they replied that, deserted by the King, they had no resource but to bow before the invaders. At last, having whiled away many weeks, he came within sight of the Muslim force and pitched his camp on the opposite bank of the river.

and encamps opposite Arabs, ix. 14 A.H. Oct. 635 A.D.

Sa'd restrains his army.

During this long period of inaction, the impatience of the Arabs was checked by the strong hand of Sa'd, to whom, as lieutenant of the Caliph, they were bound to yield implicit obedience. Excepting raids and reconnoitring expeditions nothing was attempted. Some of these, however, were sufficiently exciting. Toleiha, the *pseudo* prophet, entered alone the enemy's camp by night, and carried off three horses. Hotly chased, he slew his pursuers one after another, and single-handed carried off the last, who embraced Islam and thereafter fought faithfully by his captor's side. As the enemy drew near, the Muslim host lay couched like the tiger in its lair, ready for the fatal spring.

Rustem gets three days' truce.

The armies at last now face to face, Rustem had no more excuse for putting off the decisive day. On the morning

after his arrival he rode along the river bank to reconnoitre; and, standing on an eminence by the bridge, sent for the Muslim officer guarding the passage. A colloquy ensued; and Sa'd consented that three of his captains should go to the Persian camp, and there explain their demands to Rustem. One after another, these presented themselves. Each held the same language: *Islām*, *Tribute*, or the *Sword*. Rustem, now contemptuous in his abuse, now cowering under the fierce words of the envoys, and scared by dreams and auguries, demanded time to consider. Three days' grace, they replied, was the limit allowed by their Prophet; and that was given. A.H. 14.

When the term was over, Rustem sent to inquire whether he or they should cross for battle. Strongly pitched, as we have seen, Sa'd had no thought of moving, and bade the Persian cross as best he might. Rustem advanced, but passage was denied. All night the Arabs watched the bridge. But Rustem had another scheme; he meant to cross the river by a dam. During the night his myrmidons cast fascines and earth into the channel, and morning light discovered a causeway over which it was possible to pass. Throws dam across river,

At early morn, Rustem, clad in helmet and double suit of mail, leaped gaily on his horse. "By the morrow we shall have beaten them small," he cried; but apart with his familiars he confessed that celestial omens were against him. And, indeed, previous mishaps and the brave bearing of the Arab chiefs were sufficient, astrology apart, to inspire grave forebodings. Crossing the dam unopposed, he marshalled his great host on the western bank, with its centre facing the fortress of Kodeis. Of thirty war elephants on the field, eighteen supported the centre, the remainder being divided between the wings.[1] On a canopied golden throne by the riverside, Rustem watched the issue of the day. Messengers, posted within earshot of each other all the way to Al-Medain, shouted continually the latest news, and kept Yezdejird informed of everything that passed. and crosses to field of battle.

[1] These were distinct from the riding elephants of the Court and nobles, and must all have been imported from India. The elephant was not used by the Assyrians in war. It rarely appears in their mural representations, and only under peaceful associations.

A.H. 14.

Sa'd disabled by illness, marshals army from ramparts of Kodeis.

As the Persians began to cross, the advanced guard of the Arabs fell back upon Kodeis, beneath which the main body was drawn up. On its ramparts, Sa'd, disabled by blains and boils, lay stretched upon a litter; from whence casting down his orders inscribed on scraps of paper, he guided thus the movements of the day. The troops, unused to see their leader in a place of safety, murmured; and verses lampooning him passed round the camp. That he, the archer of renown, the "first to shed blood in Islam," should be thus aspersed was insupportable, and Sa'd had the ringleaders imprisoned in the fortress. He then descended, and discovered to the troops the grievous malady which rendered it impossible for him even to sit upright, much less to mount his horse. They accepted his excuse; for no man could doubt his bravery; but still a certain feeling of discontent survived. Resuming his couch, he harangued the army from the battlements, and then sent his Generals, with the Orators and Poets of the force, along the ranks with stirring words to rouse their martial zeal.

Warlike texts recited before the Muslim host.

At the head of every column was recited the revelation of the thousand angels fighting on the Prophet's side, together with such texts as these:—*Stir up the Faithful unto battle. If there be twenty steadfast among you, they shall put to flight two hundred, and a hundred shall put to flight a thousand. The Lord will cast terror into the hearts of the Infidels. Beware that ye turn not your back in battle; verily he that turneth his back shall draw down upon him the wrath of God. His abode shall be Hell-fire.*[1] The mention of "The day of Decision" at Bedr, with the Divine command to fight, never failed to fire the souls of the Muslim host; and here we are told, that upon its recital "the heart of the people was refreshed, and their eyes lightened, and they realised the Divine peace[2] that followeth thereupon."

Battle of Kādisiya, ix. 14 A.H. Nov. 635.

The word passed round that, till midday prayer, no one should stir. The Commander-in-chief would give the first signal by the Tekbir, or war-cry, ALLÂHU AKBAR, *God is most great!* and the host would

[1] Sūra viii. 66, etc.

[2] Same word as *Shechina*, divine influence overshadowing the heart: Suras ix. and xlviii. The practice of reciting such Suras or portions of them before battle, has been handed down to the present day.

A.H. 14.

First day; called *Armāth.*

then take up the shout three successive times from him. At the second and third shout, they were to gird their weapons on and make their horses ready. At the fourth, the ranks were to rush in one body forward with the watchword, *Our help is from the Lord!* The order was deranged by the enemy, who, hearing the first shout, advanced at once; whereupon impatient warriors from the Muslim front stepped out and, challenging to single combat, did prodigies of valour. The heroic feats of Bedr were re-enacted on this field, and the spoil, stripped from the fallen champions, was beyond description rich. Thus 'Amr ibn Ma'dikerib carried off triumphantly the bracelets and jewelled girdle of a princely victim. Another, shouting gaily the praises of his mistress,[1] closed with Hormuz, "a prince of the Gate," and bore him with his diadem captive to Sa'd. A leader of the Beni Temīm, singing like verses, pursued his adversary through the enemy's ranks; there he seized a mule-driver, and carried him with his laden beast to the Muslim lines; it was the King's baker with a load of royal viands. More remarkable still is the story of Abu Miḥjan.[2] A ringleader in the detraction of Sa'd, his offence was aggravated by drunkenness. Bound a prisoner in the fortress, under charge of Selma the General's wife, he was seized by an irrepressible ardour to join the battle. At his earnest entreaty, and under pledge of early return, the lady set him free, and mounted him on her husband's white mare. An unknown figure, he dashed now in the enemy's host, and now in circuits round it, performing marvels of bravery. Some thought it might be the chief of the Syrian contingent expected that day. Others opined that it was Al-Khiḍr, precursor of the angelic band. But Sa'd himself said, "If it were not that Abu Miḥjan is safe in durance under Selma's care, I could swear it were he, and the mare my own." According to promise, the hero, satisfied with his exploits, returned to Selma, who reimposed his fetters as before,

Abu Miḥjan.

[1] His song, of the ordinary type, ran thus:—

"The maid, with hanging tresses, milk-white breast and fingers tapering,
Knoweth full well the hero who will lay the warriors low."

[2] Ṭab. i. 2312 ff. Another account, 2354 f.

A.H. 14.

The elephants.

and shortly after secured his release.[1] Now the elephants bore down upon the Bedawi lines. The brunt of the onset fell upon the Beni Bajila. The huge beasts swaying to and fro,—"their *howdas*, manned with warriors and banners, like moving castles,"—affrighted the Arab horses, which broke away at the horrid sight. The Beni Asad diverted the attack upon themselves, and in the heroic act left four hundred dead upon the field. Then the elephants attacked the wings, spreading consternation all around; and the enemy, profiting by the confusion, pressed forward. The position was critical; and Sa'd, as a last resource, bade 'Âsim rid them from the danger at whatever cost. At once that gallant chief chose a band of archers and of agile skirmishers, who, drawing near, picked their riders from off the elephants, and boldly cut the girths. The howdas fell, and the great beasts, with none to guide them, fled. Thus relieved, the Arabs regained their ground. But the shades of darkness were falling, and both armies retired for the night.

Sa'd upbraided by his wife.

The Muslim force was downcast. The uncertain issue added point to the invectives against Sa'd, and, what was still harder for him to bear, the taunts of Selma. During the day, as seated by her lord, they watched together from the ramparts the deadly conflict, she exclaimed, "O for an hour of Al-Muthanna! Alas, alas, there is no Muthanna this day!" Stung by the words, Sa'd struck her on the face, and pointing to 'Âsim and his band, said, "What of Al-Muthanna? Was he anything at all compared with these?" "Jealousy and cowardice!" cried the high-spirited dame, faithful to her first husband's memory. "Not so," said Sa'd, somewhat softened; "I swear that no man will this day excuse me if thou dost not, who seest in what

[1] He confessed to Selma that in his cups he had been singing these verses:—

"Bury me when I die by the roots of the vine;
The moisture thereof will distil into my bones;
Bury me not in the open plain, for then I much fear
That no more shall I taste again the sweet grape."

But he pledged his word to her that he would not again indulge in drinking, nor abuse the Amir. Selma then obtained his release, and he joined his comrades on the last great day.

plight I lie." The people sided with the lady; but Sa'd was no coward, and he lived the contumely down. A.H. 14.

Second day; called *Aghwāth.* Return of first Syrian brigade.

The morning was occupied with the wounded and the dead; and the day drew on before fighting recommenced. Just then the first column of the Contingent sent back from Syria came in view. It was led by Al-Ḳa'ḳa', who, leaving Hashim to bring up the main body of five thousand on the following day, hurried forward with a thousand men. By skilful disposition Al'Ḳa'ḳa' magnified his force, in the eyes of both friend and foe. He arranged his men in squadrons of a hundred, each a little distance behind the other. Advancing, he saluted Sa'd and his comrades, and bade them joy of the coming help. Then calling on the rest to follow, he at once rode forth to defy the enemy. The "hero of the Bridge"[1] accepted the challenge. Al-Ḳa'ḳā' recognised his royal foe; and crying out, "Now will I avenge Abu 'Obeid and those that perished at the Bridge," rushed on his man and cut him to the ground. As each squadron came up, it charged with all the appearance of a fresh and independent force across the plain in sight of both armies, and shouted the Tekbir, which was answered by the same ringing cheer, *Allāhu Akbar*, from the Muslim line. The spirits of the Arabs rose. They forgot the disasters of yesterday; and by so much the heart of the Persians sank, who saw their heroes slain, one after another, at the hands of Al-Ḳa'ḳa' and his fellows. They had no elephants this day, for the gear was not yet repaired. Pressed on all sides, their horse gave way, and Rustem was only saved by a desperate rally. But the Persian infantry stood their ground, and the day closed, the issue still trembling in the balance. The fighting was severe and the carnage great. Two thousand Muslims lay dead or wounded on the field, and ten thousand Persians. All night through the Arabs kept shouting the names and lineage of their several tribes. There was shouting, too, in the Persian camp. And so, encouraging themselves, each side awaited the final struggle.

Third day; called *'Imās*

On the third morning, the army was engaged in the mournful task of removing their fallen comrades from the field. The space of a mile between the two lines was

[1] Bahman; see p. 84.

A.H. 14. strewn with them. The wounded were made over to the women to nurse, if perchance they might survive, or rather—in the language of Islam—"until the Lord should decide whether to grant, or to withhold, the crown of Martyrdom." The dead were borne to 'Odheib, a valley in the rear, where the women and children hastily dug graves for them in the sandy soil. The wounded, too, were carried thither. For the suffering sick it was a weary way under the burning sun. A solitary palm-tree stood on the road, and under its welcome shade they were for a moment laid. Its memory is consecrated in such plaintive verse as this:—

"Hail to the grateful palm that waves between Kādisīya and 'Odheib.
Around thee grow the wild sprigs of camomile and hyssop.
May dew and shower refresh thy leaves for evermore,
And let never a palm-tree be wanting at thy dry and barren waste!"

Fighting resumed: Syrian contingent comes up.

A day and night of unceasing conflict was still before the combatants. The spirit of the Persians, whose dead lay unburied on the field, flagged at the disasters of the preceding day, but much was looked for from the elephants, which, now refitted, appeared upon the field, each protected by a company of horse and foot. The battle was about to open, when suddenly Hashim came in sight with the main body of his Syrian contingent. Sweeping across the plain, he charged right into the enemy, pierced their ranks, and reaching the river bank, turned and rode triumphantly back, amid shouts of welcome. The fighting was again severe, and the day balanced by alternate victory and repulse. Yezdejird, alive to the crisis, sent his bodyguard into the field. The elephants were the terror of the Arabs, and again threatened to paralyse their efforts. In this emergency, Sa'd had recourse to Al-Ka'ka', who was achieving marvels, and had already slain thirty Persians in single combat; so that the annalists gratefully acknowledge that "had it not been for what the Lord put it into the heart of Al-Ka'ka' to do, we surely had been that day worsted." Sa'd now learned that the eye and trunk were the only vulnerable parts of the elephant: "Aim at these," he said, "and we shall be rid of this calamity." So Al-Ka'ka' with his brother Āṣim and a band of followers issued on the perilous

enterprise. There were two huge elephants, the leaders of the herd. Dismounting, Al-Ḳa'ḳā' boldly advanced, and into the eye of one, the "great white elephant" it was called, he thrust his lance. Smarting at the pain, it shook fearfully its head, threw the Mahout to the ground, and swaying its trunk to and fro, hurled Al-Ḳa'ḳā' to a distance. The other fared still worse, for they pierced both its eyes, and slashed its trunk. Uttering a shrill scream of agony, the blinded, maddened creature darted forward on the Arab ranks. Shouts and lances drove it back upon the Persians. Thus kept rushing wildly to and fro between the armies, and followed at last by the other elephants, it charged right into the Persian line; and so the whole herd of huge animals,—their trunks aloft, trumpeting as they rushed, and trampling all before them,—plunged into the river and disappeared on the farther shore. For the moment the din of war was hushed as both lines gazed at the portentous sight. But soon the battle was resumed, and they fought on till darkness again closed on the combatants with the issue still in doubt.

A.H. 14.

The elephants put to flight.

The third night brought rest to neither side. It was a struggle for life. At first there was a pause, as the light faded away; and Sa'd, fearing lest the vast host should overlap his rear, sent parties to watch the fords. There had as yet been hardly time for even momentary repose when, early in the night, it occurred to some of the Arab leaders to rally their tribes with the view of harassing the enemy. The movement, made at the first without Sa'd's cognisance, drew on a general engagement in the dark. The screams of the combatants and din of arms made *The Night of Clangour*,[1] as it is called, without parallel in the annals of Islam. It could only be compared to "the clang of the blacksmith's forge." Sa'd betook himself to prayer, for no sure tidings reached him all night through. Morning broke

The Night of Clangour: fight till morning.

[1] *Harir.* Ṭab. calls the fourth day simply the day of Al Ḳādisiya. Each day had its name, as given in margin. The first and third (reading with some MSS. Ghimās instead of 'Imās or 'Amās; the last means a "hard fight") have no apparent meaning, perhaps names of places. The second may refer to the "succour" brought by the Syrian contingent. See C. de Perceval, vol. iii. p. 481. Gibbon (chap. li.) ignores the first day, and names the other three as *Succour*, *Concussion*, and *Barking*.

A.H. 14. on the two hosts, worn and weary. Then arose Al-Ka'ka', crying out that one more vigorous charge must turn the tide, "for victory is ever his that persevereth to the end." Four-and-twenty hours long the Arabs had fought unceasingly, and now they issued forth with all the freshness and alacrity of a new attack. The Persian wings began to waver. A fierce onslaught shook their centre, which opened and laid bare the bank with Rustem on his throne. Tempestuous wind arose, and the canopy, no longer guarded, was blown into the river. The wretched Prince had barely time to fly and crouch beneath a sumpter mule, when the chance blow of a passer-by brought down its load upon his back. He crawled into the river and attempted there to hide himself. But a soldier saw and recognised his royal foe, and drawing him out, slew him on the spot; then mounting on his throne, he loudly proclaimed the conquered Prince's end.[1]

Persians routed and Rustem slain.

Destruction of Persian host.

No sooner was their leader slain, than rout and slaughter of the Persian host began. Some of the columns succeeded in passing the dam; but it was soon cut (probably by themselves to prevent pursuit), and swept away with a multitude upon it, by the pent-up stream. To the right and left, up the river bank and down, the Muslims chased the fugitives relentlessly. The plain, far and wide, was strewn with dead. The fugitive multitude, hunted into the fens and marshes, were everywhere put mercilessly to the sword. But the army was too exhausted to carry on the pursuit.

Muslim loss.

The Muslim loss far exceeded that of any previous engagement. In the final conflict 6000 fell, besides 2500 in the days before. No sooner was the battle ended, than the women and children, with clubs and pitchers of water, issued forth on a double mission of mercy and of vengeance. Every fallen Muslim, still warm and breathing, they gently raised and wetted his lips with water. But towards the wounded Persians they knew no mercy; for them they had another errand—to raise their clubs and give the *coup de grâce*. Thus had Islam for the moment extinguished pity, and implanted in the breasts of women, and even of little children, cold-blooded cruelty.

Vastness of booty.

The spoil was great beyond all parallel, both in amount and costliness. Each soldier had six thousand pieces,

[1] Ṭab. i. 2336-7; the accounts vary slightly as to details.

besides the special gifts for veterans and such as showed extraordinary valour. The jewels stripped from Rustem's body were worth 70,000 pieces, although its most costly portion, the tiara, had been swept away. The great banner of the Empire was captured on the field, made of panthers' skins, and so richly garnished with gems as to be valued at 100,000 pieces. Thus did the needy Arabs revel in the treasures of the East, the preciousness of which exceeded almost their power to comprehend. A.H. 14.

For the enemy the defeat was fateful and decisive. Little more than thirty months had passed since Khālid set foot in Al-'Irāḳ; and already that Empire,—which fifteen years before had humbled the Byzantine arms, ravaged Syria, and encamped triumphantly on the Bosphorus,—was crumbling under the blows of an enemy whose strength never exceeded thirty or forty thousand Arabs rudely armed. The battle of Al-Ḳādisīya reveals the secret. On one side there was lukewarm, servile following; on the other, an indomitable spirit, which after long and weary hours of fighting nerved the Muslims for the final charge. The vast host, on which the last efforts of Persia had been lavished, was totally discomfited; and, though broken columns escaped across the river, the military power of Persia never again gathered into formidable and dangerous shape. The country far and wide was terror-struck. The Bedawīn on either side of the Euphrates hesitated no longer. Many of them, though Christian, had fought in the Muslim ranks. These came to Sa'd and said: "The tribes which at the first embraced Islām were wiser than we. Now that Rustem hath been slain, we will accept the new belief." And so, many of them came over and made profession of the Faith. Importance of victory.

The battle (which De Goeje dates the end of 637) had been so long impending, and the preparations on so grand a scale, that the issue was watched everywhere, "from Al-'Odheib away south to Aden, and from Ubulla across to Jerusalem," as about to decide the fate of Islām. The Caliph used to issue forth alone from the gates of Medina early in the morning, if perchance he might meet some messenger from the field. At last a camel-rider arrived outside the city, who to 'Omar's question replied shortly, "The Lord hath discomfited the Persian host." Unrecognised, 'Omar followed Tidings, how received by 'Omar.

A.H. 14. him on foot, and gleaned the outline of the great battle. Entering Medina, the people crowded round the Caliph, and, saluting, wished him joy of the triumph. The courier, abashed, cried out, "O Commander of the Faithful, why didst thou not tell me?" "It is well, my brother," was the Caliph's simple answer. Such was the unpretending mien of one who at that moment was greater than either the Kaiser or the Chosroes.

CHAPTER XV

EVENTS FOLLOWING THE BATTLE OF AL-ḲĀDISĪYA. CAPTURE OF AL-MEDĀIN

A.H. 15-16. A.D. 636-637

Sa'd reoccupies Ḥīra, end of 14 A.H. Jan. 636 A.D.

By desire of the Caliph, Sa'd paused for a while to let the weary troops refit. Fragments of the defeated host escaped in the direction of Babylon, and rallied there. After two months' rest, Sa'd, now recovered from sickness, advanced to attack them. On the march he re-entered Al-Ḥīra. It was the third time the unfortunate city had been taken. Punishment for the last helpless defection was now the doubling of its tribute. Soon supplanted by Al-Kūfa, a few miles distant, the once royal city of Al-Ḥīra speedily dwindled into insignificance. But the neighbouring palace of the Khawarnaḳ, beautiful residence of a bygone Dynasty, was still left standing by the Lake of Najaf, and was sometimes visited as a country-seat by the Caliphs and their Court in after days.

Plain of Dura cleared.

The scattered Persian troops rallied first at the Tower of Babel, and then, recrossing the Euphrates, halted under the great mound of Babylon. Driven from thence, they fell back upon the Tigris. Sa'd pitched a standing camp at Babylon, from whence he cleared the plain of Dura, fifty miles broad, from the Euphrates to the Tigris. The territorial chiefs from all sides now came in, some as converts, some as tributaries; and throughout the tract between the two rivers, Muslim rule again became supreme. Several months passed; and at last, in the summer, Sa'd found himself able, with the full consent of 'Omar, now in the second year of his reign, to advance upon Al-Medain.

A.H. 15-16.

Medain, capital of Persia.

The royal City was built on both banks of the Tigris, at a sharp double bend of the river, fifteen miles below the modern Baghdad. Seleucia, on the right bank, was the seat of the Alexandrian conquerors. On the opposite shore had grown up Ctesiphon, residence of the Persian monarchs. The combined City had for ages superseded Babylon as the capital of Chaldæa. Repeatedly taken by the Romans, it was now great and prosperous, but helplessly torn by intrigue and enervated by luxury. The main City, with its Royal palaces, was on the eastern side, where the noble arch, the *Tak i Kesra*, still arrests the traveller's eye as he sails down the Tigris. Sa'd now directed his march to the quarter which lay upon the nearer side. On the way he was attacked by the Queen-mother. Animated by the ancient spirit of her race, and with a great oath that so long as the Dynasty survived the empire was invincible, she took the field with an army commanded by a veteran General, "the lion of Chosroes." She was utterly discomfited, and her champion slain by the hand of Hāshim.

Queen-mother discomfited.

Sa'd then marched forward; and, drawing a lesson from the vainglorious boast of the vanquished Princess, publicly recited before the assembled troops this passage from the sacred text:—

"Did ye not swear aforetime that ye would never pass away? Yet ye inhabited the dwellings of a people that had dealt unjustly by their own souls; and ye saw how We dealt with them. We made them a warning and example unto you."—(Sūra xiv. 46 f.)

Siege laid to western quarter. Summer 15 A.H. 636 A.D.

In this spirit they came upon the river; and lo! the famous Īwan, with its great hall of white marble, stood close before them on the farther shore. "Good heavens!" exclaimed Sa'd, dazzled at the sight; "*Allāhu Akbar!* What is this but the White Pavilion of Chosroes! Now hath the Lord fulfilled the promise which He made unto His Prophet." And each company shouted *Allāhu Akbar! Great is the Lord!* as they came up and gazed at the Palace, almost within their grasp. But the City was too strong to storm, and Sa'd sat down before it. Warlike engines were brought up, but they made no impression on ramparts of sunburnt brick. The besieged issued forth in frequent sallies; it was the last occasion on which the warriors of Persia

adventured themselves in single combat with the Arabs. The investment was strict, and the inhabitants reduced to great straits. The army lay for several months before the City; but Sa'd was not inactive in other directions. Bands were despatched wherever the great landholders failed to tender their submission. These ravaged Mesopotamia, and brought in multitudes as prisoners; but, by 'Omar's command, they were dismissed to their homes. Thus the country from Tekrit downwards, and from the Tigris to the Syrian desert, was brought entirely and conclusively under Muslim sway. A.H. 15-16.

Western quarter evacuated, end of 15 A.H. Jan. 637 A.D.

The siege at last pressed so heavily on the western quarter, that the King sent a messenger with terms. He would give up all dominion west of the Tigris if they would leave him undisturbed on the eastern side. The offer was indignantly refused. Not long after, observing the walls no longer manned, an advance was ordered. They entered unopposed; the Persians had crossed, and carrying the ferryboats with them, entirely evacuated the City on the western bank. Not a soul was to be seen. But the farther Capital with the river between was still defiant and secure. So the army for some weeks rested, and, occupying the deserted mansions of the western quarter, enjoyed a foretaste of Persian luxury.

Capture of Medāin. ii. 16 A.H. March 637 A.D.

On Al-Medain being threatened, Yezdejird had despatched his family, with the regalia and treasure, to Holwan in the hilly country to the north: and now he contemplated flight himself in the same direction. The heart of Persia had sunk hopelessly; for otherwise the deep and rapid Tigris still formed ample defence against sudden assault. Indeed, the Arabs thought so themselves; for they were occupied many weeks in search of boats, which had all been removed from the western bank. Unexpectedly, a deserter apprised Sa'd of a place where the river could be swum or forded. But the stream, always swift, was then upon the rise, and they feared lest the horses should be carried down by the turbid flood. Just then, tidings coming of the intended flight of Yezdejird, Sa'd at once resolved upon the enterprise. Gathering his force, he said to them:—"We are now at the mercy of the enemy, who, with the river at command, is able to attack us unawares. Now, the

A.H. 15-16.

Lord hath shown unto me amongst us a vision of the faithful upon horses, crossing the stream triumphantly. Arise, let us stem the flood!" The desperate venture was voted by acclamation. Six hundred picked cavalry were drawn up in bands of sixty. The foremost plunged in, and bravely battled with the rapid flood. Down and across they had already neared the other shore, when a hostile picket dashed into the water, and vainly endeavoured to beat them back. "Raise your lances," shouted 'Āsim; "bear right into their eyes." So they drove them back, and safely reached dry land. Sa'd no sooner saw them safe on shore, than he called on the rest to follow; and thus, with the cry—"Allah! triumph to Thy people; Destruction to Thine enemies!"—troop after troop leaped into the river, so thick and close, that the water was hidden from their view; and, treading as it had been solid ground, without a single loss, all gained the farther side. The Persians, taken by surprise, fled panic-stricken. The rapid passage afforded them time barely to escape. The few remaining submitted themselves as tributaries. The Muslims pursued the fugitives; but soon hastened back to share the royal spoil. They wandered over the gorgeous pavilions of a Court into which the East had been long pouring forth its treasures, and revelled in gardens decked with flowers and laden with fruit. The Conqueror established himself in the Palace of the Chosroes.

Service of Victory.

But first he was minded to render thanks in a service of praise. The princely building was turned for this end into a House of prayer; and there, followed by as many as could be spared, Sa'd ascribed the victory to the Lord of Hosts. The lesson was a passage of the Kor'ān which speaks of Pharaoh overwhelmed in the Red Sea; and also this verse, thought peculiarly appropriate:—

> "How many Gardens and Fountains did they leave behind,
> And Fields of corn, and Dwelling-places fair,
> And Pleasant things which they enjoyed!
> Even thus We made another people to inherit all."
>
> (Sūra xliv. 24 f.)

Spoil of Medāin.

The booty was rich beyond conception. Besides millions of treasure, there was countless store of silver and golden vessels, gorgeous vestments and garniture,—precious things

of untold rarity and cost. The lucky capture of a train of mules disclosed an unexpected prize consisting of the tiara, robes, and girdle of the King. The Arabs gazed in wonder at the crown, jewelled swords, and splendour of the throne; and, among other marvels, at a camel of silver, large as life, with rider of gold; and a golden horse, with emeralds for teeth, its neck set with rubies, and its trappings of gold. The precious metals lost their value, for gold was plentiful as silver. Rich works of art in sandal-wood and amber were in the hands of everyone, hoards of musk and spicy products of the East. Camphor lay about in sacks, and was at first by mistake kneaded with the cakes as salt. The prize agents had a heavy task, for each man's share (and the army now numbered 60,000) was twelve thousand pieces,[1] besides special largesses for the more distinguished. The army forwarded to Medīna, beyond the royal fifth, such rare and precious things as might stir the wonder of the simple Citizens at home. To the Caliph they sent, as fitting gift, the regalia of the Empire, and the sword of the Chosroes.[2] But the spectacle of the day was the royal banqueting carpet, seventy cubits long and sixty broad. It represented a garden, the ground wrought in gold, and the walks in silver; meadows of emeralds, and rivulets of pearls; trees, flowers, and fruits of sparkling diamonds, rubies, and other precious stones. When the rest of the spoil had been disposed of, 'Omar took counsel what should be done with the carpet. The most advised to keep it as a trophy of Islām. But 'Alī, reflecting on the instability of earthly things, objected; and the Caliph, accepting his advice, had it cut in pieces and distributed with the other booty. The part which fell to 'Alī's lot fetched twenty thousand dirhems. A.H. 15-16.

Al-Medāin offering every convenience for the seat of government, Sa'd now established himself there. The palaces and mansions of the fugitive nobles were divided

[1] Say £400 or £500 sterling for each soldier; from which (adding also the fifth) the entire value of the booty may be gathered. The treasure alone was put at 1500 million pieces, a like sum having been taken away by Rustem for the Ḳādisīya campaign.

[2] Four other swords were taken: that of the Kaisar kept by Sa'd, and of Bahram by Al-Ḳa'ḳā'; a third, of the Khāḳān of the Turks; and a fourth, of the "King of Hind."

A.H. 15-16. amongst his followers. The Royal residence he occupied himself. The grand Hall, its garnishing unchanged, was consecrated as a place of Prayer, and here the Friday, or Cathedral, service of Islam was first celebrated in the land of Persia.

CHAPTER XVI

BATTLE OF JALŪLĀ. REDUCTION OF MESOPOTAMIA. AL-KŪFA AND AL-BAṢRA FOUNDED

16 A.H. 637 A.D.

'OMAR was satisfied, as well he might be, with the success achieved. His old spirit of caution revived, and beyond the plain skirted by the hilly range to the east, he strictly forbade a forward movement. Summer of the 16th year of the Hijra was passed in repose at Al-Medāin. The King, with his broken troops, had fled into the Persian mountains; and the people on either bank of the Tigris, seeing opposition vain, readily submitted to the conqueror. In the autumn, the Persians, resolving again to try the chance of arms, flocked in great numbers to Yezdejird at Ḥolwān, about one hundred miles north of Al-Medāin. From thence part of the force advanced to Jalūla, a fortress held to be impregnable, surrounded by a deep trench, and the outlets guarded by *chevaux de frise* and spikes of iron. With 'Omar's sanction, Sa'd pushed forward Hāshim and Al-Ḳa'ḳā' at the head of 12,000 men, including the flower of Mecca and Medina; and they sat down in front of the Citadel. The garrison, reinforced from time to time by the army at Ḥolwān, attacked the besiegers with desperate bravery. Fresh troops were despatched from Al-Medain, and the siege was prolonged for eighty days. At length, during a vigorous sally, a storm darkened the air; and the Persian columns, losing their way, were pursued to the battlements by Al-Ḳa'ḳā', who seized one of the gates. Thus cut off, they turned in despair upon the Arabs, and a general engagement ensued, which was not "surpassed by the *Night of Clangour*, excepting that it was

Persian advance.

Battle of Jalūlā.

A.H. 16. shorter." Beaten at every point, many Persians in the attempt to flee were caught by the iron spikes. They were pursued, and the country strewn with corpses. Followed by the fragments of his army, Yezdejird fled to Ar Reiy, in the direction of the Caspian Sea. Al-Ka'ka' then advanced to Holwan, and defeating the enemy, left that stronghold garrisoned with Arab levies as the farthest Muslim outpost to the north.

Persians routed and Jalūla taken, end of 16 A.H. Dec. 637 A.D.

The spoil. The spoil again was rich and plentiful. Multitudes of captive women, many of gentle birth, were distributed, a much loved prize, part on the spot, and part sent to the troops at Al-Medain. The booty was valued at thirty million dirhems, besides vast numbers of fine Persian horses, which formed a welcome acquisition to the army, nine falling to the lot of every combatant. In charge of the fifth, Sa'd despatched to Medina a youth named Ziyād, of doubtful parentage (of which more hereafter), but of singular readiness and address. In presence of the Caliph, he harangued the Citizens, and recounted in glowing words the prize of Persia, rich lands, endless spoil, slave-girls, and captive princesses. 'Omar praised his speech, and declared that the troops of Sa'd surpassed the traditions even of Arab bravery. But next morning, when distributing the rubies, emeralds, and vast store of precious things, he was seen to weep. "What!" exclaimed 'Abd ar-Rahman; "a time of joy and thankfulness, and thou sheddest tears!" "Yea," replied the simple-minded Caliph; "it is not for this I weep, but I foresee that the riches which the Lord bestoweth on us will be a spring of worldliness and envy, and in the end a calamity to my people."

Ziyād sent with the Fifth to 'Omar.

'Omar refuses an advance on Persia. Ziyād was also the bearer of a petition for leave to pursue the fugitives across the border into Khorasan. 'Omar, content with the present, wisely forbade the enterprise. "I desire," he replied, "that between Mesopotamia and the countries beyond, the hills shall be a barrier, so that the Persians shall not be able to get at us, nor we at them. The plain of Al-'Irāk sufficeth for our wants. I would rather the safety of my people than thousands of spoil and further conquest." The thought of a world-wide mission was yet in embryo; obligation to enforce Islām by a universal Crusade had not yet dawned upon the Muslim mind; and,

A.H. 16.

in good truth, an empire embracing Syria, Chaldæa, and Arabia might have satisfied the ambition even of an Assyrian or Babylonian monarch. The equal mind of 'Omar, far from being unsteadied by the flush and giddiness of victory, cared first to consolidate and secure the prize already in his hands.

Operations in Mesopotamia. Hīt and Ḳirḳīsiyā taken. Summer, 16 A. H. 637 A.D.

Nothing now threatening on the Persian side, the ambition of Sa'd and his generals, checked by the Caliph's interdict, was for the present confined to the reduction of Mesopotamia. For this end, troops were sent up the Tigris as far as Tekrīt,—a stronghold about a hundred miles above Al-Medāin, held by a mixed garrison of Greek troops and Christian Bedawīn. These bravely resisted attack. After forty days the Greeks thought to desert their native allies and escape by boat. The Bedawīn, on the other hand, gained secretly over by the Muslims, seized the water-gate; and so the Greeks, taken on both sides, were put to the sword. The column, joined by the newly converted allies, pressed forward to Mosul, which surrendered and became tributary. On the Euphrates, the Muslim arms met with equal success. The Bedawīn tribes in Mesopotamia, urged by the Byzantine court to attack the invaders then threatening Hims, Sa'd was charged by 'Omar to draw them off by a diversion from his side. The fortress of Hīt on the Euphrates was accordingly besieged; but it was too strong to carry by assault. Half of the force were left before the town, and the rest marched rapidly up the river to Ḳirḳīsiyā, at its junction with the Khābūr, and took it by surprise. The garrison of Hit, when they heard of this, capitulated on condition of being allowed to retire. Thus, the lower half of Mesopotamia, from one river to the other, was reduced, the strongholds garrisoned, and the Bedawin either converted to the Faith or brought under subjection.

Persian Gulf; delta occupied; 'Otba governor of Obolla, 14 A.H. 635 A.D.

From the junction of the two rivers also, downwards on either side of the Shaṭṭ al-'Arab (the Arabian Stream) to the shores of the Persian Gulf, the rule of Islām was now thoroughly established. This tract had been exposed, with various fortune, to Arab raids ever since the invasion of Al-Muthanna. 'Omar saw that, to secure Al-'Irāḳ, it was needful to occupy the head of the Gulf as far as the range of hills on its eastern side. About the period, therefore, of

A.H. 16. Sa'd's campaign, he deputed 'Otba ibn Ghazwan, a Companion of note, with a party from Al-Bahrein, to capture the flourishing seaport of Ubulla. The garrison was defeated, and the inhabitants, chiefly Indian merchants, effected their escape by sea. The Persians rallied in force on the eastern bank of the river, and many encounters took place before the Arabs succeeded in securing their position. On one occasion, the women of the Muslim camp turning their veils into flags, and marching in martial array to the battle-field, were mistaken thus for fresh reinforcements, and contributed at a critical moment to victory. 'Otba remained at Ubulla as governor; and, as we shall see, carried on successful operations during the next three years, against Khuzistan and the Persian border. Meanwhile Ubulla gave place to the new capital of Al-Baṣra.

Baṣra founded, 17 A.H. 638 A.D., On the ruins of Ubulla when first captured, there had arisen a small town of huts constructed of reeds, with a Mosque of the same material. The settlement grew in size and importance by constant arrivals from Arabia. But the climate was inhospitable. The tide rises close to the level of the alluvial plain, which, irrigated thus with ease, stretches far and wide a sea of verdure. Groves of pomegranate, acacia, and shady trees abound; and a wide belt of the familiar date-palm fringing the river might reconcile the immigrant of the Ḥijaz to his new abode. But the moisture exhaled by so damp a soil was ill-suited to the Arabian humour; pestilential vapours followed the periodical inundations, and gnats everywhere settled in intolerable swarms.[1] Three times the site was changed; at last the pleasant spot of Al-Baṣra, near the river, which supplied a stream of running water, was fixed upon; and here a flourishing city rapidly grew up. It was laid out about the same time, and after the same fashion, as its rival Al-Kūfa. But, partly from a better climate, partly from a larger endowment of conquered lands, the northern city took the lead, as well in numbers as in influence and riches.

and Kūfa, The founding of Al-Kūfa was on this wise. The Arabs had been in occupation of Al-Medain for some months, when a deputation visited Medina. The Caliph, startled by their

[1] The traveller of to-day still complains of the pest of mosquitoes issuing from the groves of the Delta in gigantic swarms.

sallow and unwholesome look, asked the cause. They replied that the city air did not suit the Arab temperament. Whereupon, he ordered inquiry for some more healthy and congenial spot; such as, approaching nearer the desert air, and well supplied with wholesome water, would not be cut off from ready help in any time of need. After diligent search along the desert outskirts, they found no place answering so well as the plain of Al-Kūfa, not far from Al-Ḥīra, on the banks of the western branch of the Euphrates. 'Omar confirmed the choice, and left it open for each man either to remain at Al-Medāin, or transfer his habitation thither. The new Capital suited the Arabs well, and to it accordingly they migrated in great numbers. The dwellings, as at Al-Baṣra, were made at first of reeds. But fires were frequent; and after a disastrous conflagration, the Caliph gave permission that both cities might be built of brick. "The flitting camp," he wrote, "is the warrior's proper place. But if ye must have a permanent abode, be it so; only let no man have more houses than three for his wives and children, nor exceed the modest exemplar of the Prophet's dwelling-place." So the City was rebuilt, and the streets laid out in regular lines. The centre was kept an open square, in which was erected a Mosque with a portico for shade; and, for ornament, pillars of marble brought away from Al-Ḥīra. Sa'd built himself a spacious edifice, and reared in front of it a gateway, to prevent intrusion from the market-place hard by. The rumour of "the Castle of Sa'd" troubled the simple-minded Caliph, and he sent a Companion with a rescript commanding that the gateway should be pulled down. Arrived at Al-Kufa, the envoy, invited by Sa'd to enter his mansion as a guest, declined. Sa'd came forth, and received this letter at his hands:—"It hath been reported to me that thou hast builded for thyself a palace, and people call it *The Castle of Sa'd*; moreover thou hast reared a gateway betwixt thee and the people. It is not thy castle; rather is it the castle of perdition. What is needful for the treasury, that thou mayest guard and lock; but the gateway which shutteth out the people from thee, that thou shalt break down." Sa'd obeyed the order; but he protested that his object in building the portal had been falsely reported, and 'Omar accepted the excuse.

A H. 16.

x. 18 A.H. Oct. 638 A D.

'Omar bids Sa'd pull down the gateway of his palace.

A.H. 16.

The Sawād settled with the Fellāḥīn.

The settlement of the land was the next concern. The *Sawād*, or rich plain of Chaldæa, having been taken, with some few exceptions, by force of arms, was claimed by the Arab soldiery as prize of war. The judgment and equity of 'Omar is conspicuous in the abatement of this demand. After counsel held with his advisers at Medina, the Caliph ordered that cultivators who had fled during the operations in Al-'Irāk, as well as those who had kept to their holdings throughout, should be treated as *Dhimmís*, or protected subjects, and confirmed in possession on moderate tribute. Royal forests and domains, lands of the nobles and of those who had opposed the Muslim arms, and the endowments of Fire-temples, were confiscated; but the demand for their division as ordinary prize was denied. Equitable distribution was impossible, and the attempt would have but bred bad blood amongst the people. The necessities also of the great system of canals, and of the postal and other services, as first charge upon the revenues, demanded that the public land should be kept intact.

The revenues of the State came from two sources, the forfeited lands of which it had taken possession, and out of which estates were bestowed upon some of the principal Companions, and from the taxes payable by the non-Muslim native cultivators of the soil. These taxes were later on of two kinds, the land or property tax (*Kharáj*), and the poll tax (*jizya*). It is usual to say that the latter was payable by non-Muslims only; but at first the two terms are often interchanged, and, in point of fact, both were paid by the non-Muslims. The Muslims did not pay taxes; but merely tithes—a tenth of the produce of their lands. On the contrary, the income of the lands conquered was divided amongst them in the shape of pensions. As long as the conquests were going on, the spoil was great and the pensioners comparatively few; and this arrangement worked very well. But, when the native cultivators began to come over to Islām in large numbers, difficulties arose.

Crown lands and endowments of Kūfa and Baṣra.

The confiscated lands scattered over the province were administered by Crown agents, and the profits shared between the captors and the State. The prize domains of Al-Kūfa,—conquered by the armies of Khālid and of Sa'd,—were much more extensive than those of Al-Baṣra. Shortly

after its foundation, the inhabitants of Al-Baṣra sent representatives to urge that their endowments should be increased, and their income made more adequate to their responsibilities. "Al-Kūfa," said their spokesman, "is a well-watered garden which yieldeth in season its harvest of dates, while ours is brackish land. Part bordereth on the desert, and part upon the sea, which laveth it with a briny flood. Compared with Al-Kūfa, our poor are many, and our rich are few. Grant us, therefore, of thy bounty." Recognising the justice of the plea, 'Omar made substantial addition to their endowments from the Crown lands of the Chosroes. But, although Al-Kūfa was richer, it had heavier obligations to discharge than the sister City. Its government had a wider range; and the charge of garrisons at various points, as Ḥolwān, Mosul, and Ḳirḳisiyā, had to be provided from the resources at the command of Sa'd. A.H. 16.

Influence of the two cities on the future of Islām.

Al-Kūfa and Al-Baṣra, unique in their own origin, had a singular influence on the destinies of the Caliphate and of Islām at large. The vast majority of the population were of pure Arabian blood. The tribes which, scenting from afar the prey of Chaldæa and Persia, kept streaming into Chaldæa from every corner of Arabia, settled chiefly there. At Al-Kufa the races coming from the south of Arabia predominated; at Al-Baṣra, those coming from the north. Rapidly they grew into two great and luxurious Capitals, with an Arab population each of from 150,000 to 200,000 souls. On the literature, theology, and politics of Islām, the two cities had a greater influence than the whole Muslim world besides. There was abundance of time and opportunity. Service in the field being desultory and intermittent, the intervals were often long and frequent, but too readily spent in listless idleness. Excepting when enlivened by the fruits of some new victory, secluded harims afforded their lords little variety of recreation or amusement. Otherwise the time was whiled away in the converse of social knots; and in these, while they discussed the problems of the day, they loved still more to live in the past, to recall the marvellous story of their Faith, and fight their battles over again. Hence Tradition, and the two great Schools of Al-Baṣra and Al-Kufa. But the debates and gossip of these clubs too often degenerated into tribal rivalry and domestic

A.H. 16. scandal. The people grew petulant and factious; and both Cities became hotbeds of turbulence and sedition. The Bedawi element, conscious of its strength, was jealous of Koreish, and impatient at whatever checked its own capricious humour. Thus factions sprang up which, controlled by the strong and wise arm of 'Omar, at length broke loose under weaker Caliphs, rent the unity of Islam, and brought on disastrous days which, but for its marvellous vitality, must have proved fatal to the Faith.

CHAPTER XVII

CAMPAIGN IN NORTHERN SYRIA. BATTLE OF THE YARMUḴ

A.H. 15. A.D. 636.

Northern Syria.

As he had left 'Amr in Palestine and Shurahbīl in the Jordan district, so now Khalid left Yezid to complete the conquest of the new province, whilst he himself with Abu 'Obeida pushed on towards the north. They followed the route through Coelo-Syria, and first Baalbek and at last Emesa were taken, and it is said they followed the Orontes for the greater part of its course. But the expedition was little more than a reconnaissance, and had to retire precipitately before the advance of a new Greek army.

Treatment of Syrians.

Had the Muslims ill-treated the people of Syria or persecuted their religion, their position would now have been desperate indeed; but their leniency towards the conquered, and their justice and integrity presented a marked contrast to the tyranny and intolerance of the Romans. The result was that when the new Roman army, after much preparation, appeared upon the scene, the Muslims were to all intents and purposes in a friendly country. The Syrian Christians enjoyed more civil and political liberty under their Arab invaders than they had done under the rule of Heraclius, and they had no wish to return to their former state. The people of Emesa, even including the Jewish element, determined to close their gates against the Greeks, and await the issue of the conflict, knowing that even if the issue should be a return to their former state, things could not be very much worse than they were before. The Muslims, when they withdrew, returned the taxes which they had collected, since they were no longer able to fulfil their part of the bargain in guaranteeing security of life and property. A Nestorian

A.H. 15. bishop writes about the year 15: "The Taiites (or Arabs), to whom God has accorded in our days the dominion, are become our masters; but they do not combat the Christian religion; much rather they protect our faith; they respect our priests and our holy men, and make gifts to our churches and our convents."[1] Nothing could show more plainly how amicable were the relations between the Christian population and their Mohammadan conquerors, than the fact that devotees of both religions who shared the great Church of Damascus between them entered by one door.

Return of the Greeks. The new army of Heraclius included Christian Arabs of the Ghassân under their "king" Jabala, as well as Armenians, Syrians, and Greeks. It was under the supreme command of Theodore the Sakkellarius, under whom were Baanes the Armenian, and Jerja (George). Their number is stated variously as one and as two hundred thousand: the number of Christian Arabs being about 12,000, and the Armenians the same number. The Muslims were no doubt less numerous. They had, since the beginning of the year 15, concentrated upon the City of Damascus; but as the Greek army advanced southwards, they abandoned that town and fell back through the Jaulan country until they rested upon the banks of the Yarmûk (Hieromax, now called after the local tribe Sherî'at al-Menâdira), and here they awaited the approach of the Greek host. It arrived in the month of Jumâdà II.

Battle of Yarmuk, 20th Aug. 636. The opposing armies came face to face on Tuesday, the 12th of Jumâdà II., of the year 15 (23rd July 636). The fierce and decisive battle which followed is variously named the battle of the Yarmuk—after the great river which divides the highlands of Jaulan from those of Ajlun, and flows into the Jordan at a point some five miles below the point where that river leaves the Lake of Tiberias—and the battle of Yaḳusa, from a tributary of the Yarmûk which flows from the neighbourhood of Fîḳ (Aphek), and joins the latter river from the north-west.

The village of Yaḳûsa was rediscovered by Seetzen in 1806. On the day on which the two armies met, an engagement took place which resulted in favour of the Muslims; but after that, they remained facing one another for an

[1] Assemani, *Bibl. Orient.* iii. 2, p. xcvi.

entire month, without either side striking a blow. During these weeks disaffection spread amongst the Greeks, several of the leaders intrigued with the enemy, and a quarrel arose between the commander-in-chief and the leader of the Armenian contingent. At last, on a day in the month of Rejeb when a strong south wind blew, and the Greeks were blinded by clouds of dust in addition to the scorching rays of an August sun, the Muslim army advanced to the attack. The Greeks had no fortune that day. Whenever they succeeded in penetrating the Arab lines, the women laid hold of swords and drove them back. Their cavalry sought refuge in flight across the plains. The infantry, roped together in companies to increase their steadiness, fell easy victims to the lances of the Arabs, or were hurled down the precipitous sides of the Wadi.[1] The heterogeneous host of the Greeks began to crumble up before the smaller but united army of the Arabs.[2] The Sakkellarius perished in the fight: Baānes, however, seems to have made good his flight. It is said that, fearing to face Heraclius, he found his way to Mount Sinai, where he was received as a monk and assumed the name of Anastasius.[3] He became the author of a homily on the sixtieth Psalm. When news of the disaster reached Heraclius at Antioch, he bade a last farewell to Syria: "Farewell Syria, my fair province. Thou art an enemy's now"; and quitted Antioch for Constantinople. A.H. 15.

The loss on the Muslim side was also considerable, but it was as nothing compared to what they gained by this battle. Many of the "Companions" lost their lives, and many bore the marks of wounds received there to their graves; but now Khalid could declare that "Syria sat as quiet as a camel." They could now for the first time call Syria their own.

The work of recovering the ground lost in the retreat of the Muslim lines to the Yarmuḳ did not take many weeks. Khālid recalled.

[1] Hence, M. de Goeje thinks, the form of the name Waḳuṣa, from *waḳaṣa* "to break the neck."

[2] 'Abdallah ibn Zubeir, who, though a mere boy, had accompanied his father to the wars, saw Abu Sufyan and some people of Ḳoreish holding aloof and watching how the battle went, much as did Rob Roy at the battle of Prestonpans; but this may be a later invention intended to blacken the face of the Umeiyad Caliphs who were descended from Abu Sufyān.

[3] *Cf.* p. 93 f.

A.H. 15. Damascus was again in their hands in the same month in which the battle was fought, exactly twelve months after its first capture. As the Greeks retired, the country fell into the hands of the Arabs so naturally that this re-conquest is scarcely mentioned. But Khalid's occupation in Syria was gone. The country had been as good as won, and it was now a question of readjusting the relations of the governed to their new rulers, of fostering the resources of the country, and encouraging agriculture. The military chief had to give place to the civil functionary; the sword to the pen; Khalid to Abu 'Obeida. There is no occasion to seek for any ulterior motives which might lead 'Omar to replace Khalid by Abu 'Obeida. Least of all can personal dislike have influenced him. 'Omar was too great for that. He was, however, scrupulous to a fault in the management of public money, and Khalid appears to have grown rich at the expense of the State. This might have led 'Omar to recall him to Medina; but the truth was, the soldiers of Al-'Irāḳ had done the work for which they had been transferred to Syria. They were now required in the country of the two rivers, and were ordered home; and Khālid's lot was naturally theirs.

Completion of the Conquest.

Khālid, however, remained with Abu 'Obeida. 'Amr returned to Palestine, and set about the siege of Jerusalem, or as it was then called Aelia; Sharabbil returned to the Jordan and took Acca (Acre), Tyre, and Seppharis. Yezid with his brother Mu'awiya captured Saida (Sidon), 'Irsa, Jubeil, and Beyrout, on the sea-coast of the Damascus province; whilst Abu 'Obeida pushed northwards by Baalbek, Emesa, and Kinnasrin (Chalcis), to Aleppo and Antioch. Khalid set out with him, but soon left him in order to report himself at Medina; and Abu 'Obeida remained as governor of the whole of Syria, the northern limit of his conquests being a line drawn from Antioch due east to the Euphrates, and the southern the confines of Arabia and Egypt. It was not, however, until the Muslim rulers had begun to cope with the naval forces of the Mediterranean that their authority was established beyond dispute along the sea-board, as it had long been in the interior.

CHAPTER XVIII

CAPTURE OF JERUSALEM

15 A.H. 636 A.D.

Palestine conquered.

THE main attack of the Arabs was, as we have seen, on the Hauran. Issuing from Arabia, their northward course had been along the highway to Damascus, the pilgrim route of the present day, east of the Dead Sea. The base of operations throughout the Syrian campaign was at Al-Jabiya, a town on the high land to the east of the Sea of Galilee; from whence columns could be forwarded, by the great military roads, either to Damascus and the north, or westward to Tiberias, the Jordan, and Palestine. Soon after the battle of Fihl and siege of Damascus, the greater part of the Jordan province fell rapidly under the arms of 'Amr and Shurahbil. In Palestine proper, Jerusalem, Ramleh, and Cæsarea alone held out.

Jerusalem capitulates. End of 15 A.H., Jan. 637 A.D.

'Omar's journey to Jābiya.

Towards Jerusalem, full of associations sacred to the Muslims, 'Amr first directed his steps. On his approach, Artabun (Aretion) retired with his army into Egypt. The Patriarch sued for peace. One condition he is said to have made, that 'Omar should himself come to the Holy City, and there in person settle the capitulation. The Caliph, braving the objections of his court, at once set out, journeying direct for Al-Jabiya. It was a memorable occasion, the first progress of a Caliph beyond the limits of Arabia.

Jerusalem was to the Muslim an object of intense veneration, not only as the cradle of Judaism and Christianity, but as the first *Kibla* of Islam, or sacred spot to which the Faithful turn in prayer; and also the shrine at which Mohammad alighted on the heavenly journey which he performed by night.[1] 'Omar, having inspected the site of

[1] Kor. 17, 1. *Life of Mohammad*, p. 121.

A.H. 15.

the temple of Solomon said his prayers near the church of St Mary, which stood on the site of the Aksa Mosque.

Christian tradition regarding the visit.

Mohammadan tradition gives no further detail respecting this memorable visit. But Christian writers say that 'Omar accompanied the Patriarch over the city, visited the various places of Pilgrimage, and graciously inquired into their history. At the appointed hour, the Patriarch bade the Caliph perform his orisons in the church of the Resurrection, where they chanced to be. But he declined to pray either there, or in the church of Constantine where a carpet had been spread for him, saying kindly that if he did so his followers would take possession of the church for ever as a place where Muslim prayer had once been offered up. 'Omar also visited Bethlehem; and having prayed in the church of the Nativity, left a rescript with the Patriarch, who accompanied him on the pious errand, securing the Christians in possession of the building, with the condition that not more than one Mohammadan should ever enter at a time. The stipulation was disregarded, and a Mosque was eventually erected there, as well as on the site of the church of Constantine.

'Omar returns to Medina.

Whatever the truth in these traditions, 'Omar did not prolong his stay in Jerusalem. Having settled the matter for which he came, the only other duty he performed was to divide Palestine into two provinces; one he attached to Jerusalem, and the other to Ramleh. He then returned by the way he came back again to Medina.

Causes facilitating conquest of Syria.

Thus was Syria, from the farthest north to the border of Egypt, within the space of three years, lost to Christendom. One reflects with wonder at the feeble resistance of the Byzantine power, military and naval, and of its renowned strongholds, to this sudden inroad. The affinity of the Syrian Bedawin to the Arabs no doubt facilitated the conquest. There was also an element of weakness in the settled population; luxurious living had made the race effeminate, and unable to resist the onset of wild and fanatic invaders. Still worse, they had no heart to fight. What patriotic vigour might have still survived, was lost in religious strife, and rival sects rejoiced each in the humiliation of its neighbour. Loyalty was smothered by bitter jealousies, and there are not wanting instances of

active assistance rendered by Jews and Christians to the enemy. There may have been even a sense of relief in the equal, though contemptuous, licence which the haughty conquerors conceded to all alike. But there was a deeper cause,—the decrepitude of the Roman empire. The virtue and vigour needed to repel the shock of barbarian invasion were gone. And while northern hordes gradually amalgamated with the nations which they overran, the exclusive faith and intolerant teaching of Islām kept the Arabs a race distinct and dominant. A.H. 15.

The Arabs do not settle in Syria as in Chaldæa.

The conquerors did not spread themselves abroad in Syria as in Chaldæa. They founded here no such Arabian towns and military settlements as Al-Baṣra and Al-Kūfa. The country and climate were also less congenial. Though a land of brooks of water, of vines and fig-trees, of oil-olive and honey, still the Syrian shores offered fewer attractions to the Arabian than the hot and sandy plains of Al-'Irāḳ with their familiar garb of tamarisk and date. The Arabs came to Syria as conquerors; and as conquerors they settled largely, particularly the southern tribes, in Damascus, Ḥimṣ, and other centres of administration. But the body of native Syrians, urban and rural, remained after the conquest substantially the same as before; and through long centuries of degradation they clung, as the surviving remnant still clings, to their ancestral faith.

East cut off from the West.

I have spoken of the loss of Syria as the dismemberment of a limb from the Byzantine empire. In one respect it was something more. For their own safety, the Greeks dismantled a broad belt on the border of hostile and now barbarous Syria. The towns and fortresses within this tract were razed, and the inhabitants withdrawn. And so the neutral zone became a barrier against travel to and fro. For all purposes, social, religious, and commercial, the road was for generations closed. Pilgrimage, it is true, and commerce, from the West, could be maintained by sea; but in respect of communication by land, the East for the time was severed from the West.

Silence of Byzantine annalists.

"The abomination of desolation stood in the Holy place." The cradle of Christianity, Zion, the joy of the whole earth, was trodden under foot, and utterly cut off from the sight of its devoted worshippers. And all is told by the Byzantine

A.H. 15. writers in a few short lines; while the pen of the Christian annalist refused, as well it might, to write the sad story of cowardice and shame.

Contract of 'Omar. The following is the tenor of the treaty made at Al-Jabiya by which Jerusalem was ceded to the Muslims, as it is handed down by a number of traditionists:—

"In the name of the most merciful God.

"This is the treaty for the people of Aelia. This is the favour which the servant of God, the Commander of the Faithful, grants to the people of Aelia. He gives them the assurance of the preservation of their lives and properties, their churches and crosses, of those who set up, who display and who honour these crosses. Your churches will not be transformed into dwellings nor destroyed, nor will any one confiscate anything belonging to them, nor the crosses or belongings of the inhabitants. There will be no constraint in the matter of religion, nor the least annoyance. The Jews will inhabit Aelia conjointly with the Christians, and those who live there will require to pay the poll-tax, like the inhabitants of other towns. Greeks and robbers are to leave the town, but will have a safe-conduct until they reach a place of security. Still, those who prefer to remain may do so on condition of paying the same poll-tax as the rest. If any of the people of Aelia desire to leave with the Greeks, taking their goods, but abandoning their chapels and crosses, they will be granted personal safety, until they arrive at a sure place. The strangers in the town may remain on the same condition of paying the tax, or, if they wish, they may leave also with the Greeks, and return to their own land. They will have nothing to pay until one harvest shall have been gathered in. All that this treaty contains is placed under the alliance and protection of God, and of His Apostle (peace upon him!), and of his successors, and of the Faithful, so long as they pay the tax.

"Witnessed by Khalid ibn al-Welid, 'Amr ibn al-'Âs 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Auf, and Mu'awiya ibn abi Sufyan."[1]

'Omar, who had defeated two Emperors upon their own territory, entered Jerusalem riding on a camel, and wearing

[1] Khâlid recalled from Emesa, went to Medîna, and now seems to have returned with 'Omar to Syria. It is curious that Abu 'Obeida is not a witness.

A.H. 15.

'Omar's simple habits.

a worn-out mantle of camel's hair. It is said that his own subjects, rendered less unsophisticated by what they had seen of the world, were scandalized and begged him to change his dress and to mount a horse. 'Omar yielded as to the last point, but kept the halter of his camel in his hand. Not liking the pace of the horse, however, he remounted his camel. Theophanes thus describes the impression which 'Omar made upon the Christians. "He entered the Holy City clad in a worn mantle of camel's hair and showing a diabolical expression of piety. He demanded to be shown the temple of the Jews, which Solomon had caused to be built, that there he might adore his own blasphemies. Sophronius, the archbishop, seeing him, cried: "See the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place." And this champion of piety wept over the Christian people with many tears. Arrived in the town, 'Omar was offered by the patriarch a vestment of linen and a shirt, but the most he could be prevailed upon to do was to wear them until his own were washed, when he returned them to Sophronius.

Such tales from a Christian source confirm similar legends of the Muslims. One narrator mentions that 'Omar on the way to Al-Jabiya, on coming to a ford, dismounted, undressed, and waded across, leading his camel. Abu 'Obeida remonstrated: "To-day you have done a scandalous thing in the eyes of the people of the land." 'Omar's feelings were hurt. "O Abu 'Obeida, would that another than you had said that to me! Just think! We were the most obscure and despised of men and the feeblest, and God has glorified us by Islām. If you seek to glorify it in another way, God will humble you." Another account states that it was Abu 'Obeida who appeared in public in a coarse woollen dress, and was reproved: "See, you are commander-in-chief of the armies in Syria, and we are surrounded by enemies. Change your attire and put on a better;" to which he replied: "I will not alter the state in which I was when the Apostle of God lived."

Eutychius and the authors of the histories of Jerusalem devote several pages to the discovery of the Temple of Solomon by 'Omar.

That, however, the object of 'Omar's journey to Syria

A.H. 15. was not merely to receive the capitulation of Jerusalem appears from the fact that he did not apparently make directly for that City, but went first to Al-Jabiya in the confines of Damascus. The purpose of his coming was to set the whole government of the country upon a sound basis, to revise the treaties and fix the taxes upon real and other estate, and the mutual relations of conquerors and conquered to each other.

Land tax. For the purposes of taxation the land was divided into two classes, *'ushriya*, *i.e.* tithable, and *kharajiya*. By the former were indicated those countries in which the inhabitants had embraced Islam from the commencement, which had been cleared by the Muslims, and which had been conquered and redivided amongst them. The second included those of which the inhabitants had submitted under treaty. 'Omar had from the first the intention of considering the whole of Syria as a conquered province, and of distributing it amongst the Muslims. On the advice, however, of Mo'adh ibn Jebel it was all made *kharajiya*, with the exception of a small quantity of which the owners had gone away and which was given by election to some Muslims, or which consisted of uncultivated land, without legal holder, which Muslims had taken up. The conquest had made the country a public domain, *ager publicus*, of which the occupant had only the usufruct (*possessio*), for which he paid annually to the State for every *jarib* (a piece of land 60 cubits × 60, but varying in different countries) a certain quantity of fruit or a ground-rent in money (*kharaj*). The sale of such land alienated only the usufruct, since the domain (rikab al-ard) belongs to the State. Consequently the *kharaj* continues to be collected whether the owner turns Muslim or not.

Poll-tax. In addition to this tax on land (*census soli*) the new Muslims—in Syria, Christians, Jews, and Samaritans—had to pay a capitation tax (*census capitis*) or *jizya*. Learned Mohammadans consider this tax as a ransom from death accorded to the "people of the book" (including in this term Magians as well as Christians and Jews), in opposition to idolaters, who have to choose between conversion and the sword. The *jizya* is not payable by women, children, or persons incapacitated, but only by men capable of bearing

arms—"those wearing a beard." The richer proprietors paid four dinars or forty dirhems per annum; those in comfortable circumstances half that amount; and all others a quarter (one dīnar or ten dirhems). In addition each one had to pay per month a certain quantity of wheat, oil, vinegar, honey, and dripping, for the maintenance of the Muslims, to whom one was also obliged to accord hospitality for three days for soldiers on the march—stabling (without barley) for the horses, and food (which did not necessitate the slaughtering of a sheep or even of a fowl) for the men. The expense of this entertainment was repaid once a year. The *jizya* varied with the cultivable value of the country. That of Syria was higher than that of the Yemen. A.H. 15.

Upon these clients or "people of protection" (ahl adh-dhimma) twelve conditions were imposed, six necessary and six desirable. The former were that they should not revile the Ḳor'ān, nor Moḥammad, nor Islām; that they should not marry a Muslim woman; that they should not attempt to convert a Muslim or injure him in life or goods; and that they should not assist the enemy nor harbour spies. From the client committing any of these offences the protection of the Muslims was withdrawn; that is, he becomes an outlaw and his life forfeited. The six "desirable" conditions are—that they should wear distinctive clothing, the *ghiyār*, a yellow patch on their dress, and the girdle (*zannār*); that they should not build houses higher than those of the Muslims; nor ring their wooden bells (nāḳūs), nor read their scriptures in a loud voice; nor drink wine in public, nor let their crosses or swine be seen; that their dead should be wept and buried in silence; and that they should not mount a horse, only mules and asses. The breach of these regulations was visited with penalties.[1] Protected peoples.

Such in substance was the Contract of 'Omar which regulated the civil and ecclesiastical position of the conquered people. It permitted the free exercise of worship within churches and houses, forbidding, however, the erection of new buildings. The civil prescriptions on the contrary were odious and degrading. Jews and Samaritans shared the lot of the Christians, but, until the accession of the second Umeiyad Caliph (60-64 A.H.), the latter were exempt from

[1] *Cf.* Hamaker, *Incerti auctoris liber*, etc., p. 165 f.

A.H. 15. the land tax, in return for services rendered by them since the conquest.

Treaties. Financial affairs had been regulated for the time being by treaties made with individual towns by the generals who took them. 'Omar contented himself with revising them with a view to uniformity. Thus the Christian governor of Bosra in the Hauran claimed that the treaty made with that town stipulated for the supply of a certain quantity of wheat, vinegar, and oil as ransom for himself and the town, and prayed 'Omar to ratify it. Abu 'Obeida, however, denied the fact alleged, and the town had to submit to the same terms as the rest, the payment of land (*kharāj*) and capitation tax. This shows that at first these treaties were not written, and the law not always consistently executed. When at Al-Jabiya 'Omar saw some Christian lepers, and ordered that they should be provided for out of the poor's rate (*zakāt*). Since the canon law, however, forbade the participation of unbelievers in the *zakāt*, this charity fell into disuse.

Non-Muslims. Jabala, the "king" of Ghassan, according to one account, remained Christian. Being a high-born Arab, he objected to pay the capitation tax of the subject races, but 'Omar refused in spite of his lineage to let him off with the *zakāt* alone, which the Muslims paid. Jabala therefore went into voluntary exile with many of his tribe to Asia Minor. Later on, however, 'Omar repented of his severity, and in the year 21 he invited him to return upon his own terms. Jabala declined; but when the tribe of Taghlib, who were settled in Mesopotamia, threatened to follow his example for the same reason, 'Omar and his council went out of their way to devise a means to retain them upon Muslim territory.

According to another account Jabala did become a Muslim, but when 'Omar permitted an Arab whom Jabala had struck to retaliate by striking back, Jabala's pride was so offended by this equality of high and low that he fled to Constantinople and died a Christian.

But whilst the purpose of receiving the submission of Jerusalem was not the sole motive for 'Omar's journey to Syria, he must have desired eagerly to be one of the first to enter the Holy City, round which clustered so many sacred memories of the prophets, and which was the goal

of the night-journey of the Prophet of Arabia. It should be added that Sir William Muir rejects the Contract of 'Omar as unworthy of him; and the six "desirable" conditions enumerated above certainly seem to belong to a later generation. Perhaps there is a confusion between 'Omar I. and 'Omar II. A.H. 15.

CHAPTER XIX

RISING IN NORTHERN SYRIA

17 A.H. 638 A.D.

Rising in Northern Syria.

In the sixth year of 'Omar's Caliphate, a desperate effort was made by the Greeks, at one moment not without some prospect of success, to shake off the Muslim yoke and recover possession of Northern Syria.

Greeks support Bedawi rising, 17 A.H. 638 A.D.

The movement is attributed to an appeal from the Christian tribes of Upper Mesopotamia, who besought the Emperor to save them from falling under the adversary's sway. Although the strongholds of Mesopotamia had fallen into the hands of Sa'd, yet their garrisons had little control over the wandering Bedawin; and many of the Christian tribes still looked for support to the Persian or Byzantine rule. The maritime power of the West was yet untouched. Cæsarea with its naval supports remained proof against landward attack; and the whole sea-coast was kept unsettled by the fear, or by the hope, that a fleet might at any time appear. The Emperor now promised the dwellers in Mesopotamia to second their efforts by way of the sea. An expedition was directed from Alexandria against Antioch, while the Bedawin gathered in great hordes around Hims. Thus seriously threatened, Abu 'Obeida called in his outlying garrisons. But finding the enemy too strong to be dispersed by the force at his disposal, he sent an urgent summons for assistance to Medina. Thereupon 'Omar ordered Sa'd to despatch at once a strong column from Al-Kufa under Al-Ka'ka' for the relief of Hims; and likewise to effect a diversion in Upper Mesopotamia. Meanwhile the Greeks had landed from their ships. Antioch threw open her gates to them; and Kinnasrin, Aleppo, and other towns in the north, were in full revolt. A council of war was called. Khalid was for giving battle, but Abu 'Obeida,

feeling too weak to cope with the now combined forces of the Bedawin and Greeks, retired to Hims; and there, hemmed in by enemies, awaited the succour advancing from Al-Kūfa. So grave did 'Omar himself consider the crisis, that, quitting Medina for the second time, he journeyed to Al-Jabiya, intending to march in person with the reinforcements northwards.[1] But while on his journey, a change had already come over the scene. Their prolonged absence in the distant north had alarmed the Bedawin for the safety of their desert homes, so that, returning south, they began to forsake the Emperor's cause. Seeing now his opportunity, Abu 'Obeida issued from his fortress, and after a severe engagement routed the enemy, who fled in confusion, and before the arrival of Al-Ka'ka' were already totally dispersed. 'Omar returned to Medina, delighted at the result. He specially commended the alacrity of the Kufa column:—"The Lord reward them," he wrote to Sa'd, "for their ready gathering and speedy march to the succour of their beleaguered brethren."

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Abu 'Obeida puts enemy to flight.

It was the last effort of Constantinople to expel the invader from Syria, whose yoke was now plainly not to be shaken off. The diversion attempted in Mesopotamia had also the opposite effect of reducing that province to its farthest limits. Not content with this, the infant faith, becoming conscious of its giant strength, began to stretch itself still farther north. Success in Mesopotamia was followed up by a campaign in Asia Minor; and the name of 'Iyad, under whom even Khalid did not disdain to serve, begins to figure as one of terror in the brief Byzantine record. Nasibin, Ar-Roha, and other strong places on the frontier were taken or recaptured, and part even of Armenia overrun.

Campaign in Northern Mesopotamia, 17 A.H. 638 A.D.

Most of the Bedawi tribes in Mesopotamia embraced Islam. There were exceptions, and the story of Beni Iyad is singular. They migrated to the north, and found an asylum in Byzantine territory. But 'Omar, nettled at their disappearance, and fearing lest they should remain a thorn in his side, demanded their extradition, on pain of expelling all Christian tribes living under his protection. The Emperor, unwilling to expose these to ill-treatment, complied with

Christian tribes. Beni Iyad.

[1] This second visit of 'Omar to Al-Jabiya is recorded by Ibn al-Athir, ii. 414.

A.H. 17.

Beni Taghlib allowed to pay tithe.

the demand. Equally remarkable is the tale of the Beni Taghlib. They tendered submission to Al-Weïd, who, solicitous for the adhesion of this famous race, pressed them with some rigour to abjure their ancient faith. 'Omar was displeased;—"Leave them," he wrote, "in the profession of the Gospel. It is only within the Arabian peninsula, where are the Holy Places, that none but a Muslim tribe is to remain." Al-Weïd was removed from his command; and it was enjoined on his successor to stipulate only that the usual tribute should be paid, that no member should be hindered from embracing Islam, and that children should not be educated in the Christian faith. The tribe, deeming in its pride the payment of "tribute" an indignity, sent a deputation to the Caliph:—They were willing, they said, to pay the tax, if only it were levied under the same name as that taken from the Muslims. The liberality of 'Omar allowed the concession; and the Beni Taghlib enjoyed the singular privilege of being assessed as Christians at a "double *Tithe*," instead of paying the obnoxious badge of subjugation.

Fall of Cæsarea, 17 A.H. 638 A.D.

The last place to hold out in Syria was Cæsarea. It fell in the fifth year of 'Omar's Caliphate. 'Amr had sat long before it. But, being open to the sea, and the battlements landward strong and well manned, it resisted his efforts; and although Yezid sent his brother Mu'awiya with reinforcements from Damascus, the siege was prolonged for several years. Sallies persistently made by the garrison, were driven back with equal constancy: but in the end, the treachery of a Jew revealed a weak point in the defences; the city was carried by storm and with prodigious carnage. Four thousand prisoners of either sex were despatched with the royal booty to Medina, and there sold into slavery.[1]

[1] The Jew betrayed the town by showing the Arabs an aqueduct, through which they effected an entrance. The population was mixed: 70,000 Greeks: 30,000 Samaritans: and 200,000 (?) Jews. It was a sad fate that of the captives. Multitudes of Greeks, men and women, pined miserably in strange lands in hopeless servitude. Amongst these must have been many women of gentle birth degraded now to menial office; or if young and fair to look upon, reserved for a worse fate, liable, when their masters became tired of them, to be sold into other hands. No wonder that Al-Kindi in his Apology inveighs, with scathing denunciation, against the proceedings of the Muslims in these early wars.

A.H. 17.

The accounts vary as to who it was who actually took the town. 'Amr had attempted to take it immediately after the fall of Jerusalem. Yezid, as soon as he had succeeded Abu 'Obeida as governor of Syria, came to try his hand at it; but a malady from which he suffered required his departure to Damascus, where he died at the end of the year 18. Then Mu'awiya, his brother, who succeeded him, made a grand effort and, aided by treason, took the town in the month of Shauwal of the year 19 (October 640 A.D.). 'Amr passed to fresh conquests, and Mu'awiya remained in Syria to lay the foundations of a dynasty and a throne.

Khālid brought to trial, 17-18 A.H. 638-9 A.D.

The career of Khālid ibn al-Welid had an unfortunate ending. He came back from the campaign in the north to his seat of government at Kinnasrin greatly enriched with the spoils of war. In hopes of his bounty, many old friends flocked around him. Amongst them was Al-Ash'ath, the Kinda chieftain, to whom he gave the princely largess of one thousand pieces of gold. Again, at Āmid, Khālid had indulged in the luxury of a bath mingled with wine, the odour whereof, as he came forth, still clung about his person. On both charges he was arraigned. About the second, there could be no question; the use of wine even in a bath, was a forbidden thing, and Khālid now forswore the indulgence. The other offence was graver in the Caliph's eyes. Either the gift was booty of the army; or, if Khalid's own to give away, he was guilty of culpable extravagance. Whichever it was, he deserved to be deposed from his command. In such terms a rescript was addressed to Abu 'Obeida, and sent by the hands of a courier charged to see that the command was fully carried out. Khalid was to be accused publicly; his helmet taken off; his hands bound with his head-kerchief; and so arraigned he was to declare the truth.

Arraigned for malversation before Abu 'Obeida.

Abu 'Obeida had an ungracious task, seeing that to the degraded warrior he was beholden for his victories in Syria. But 'Omar's word was law. And so he summoned Khalid from Kinnasrin, proclaimed an assembly in the Mosque of Hims, and, standing in the pulpit, placed Khalid in their midst. Then the courier put the Caliph's question—From whence the money given to Al-Ash'ath came? Khalid, confounded at the unexpected charge, made no reply. Pressed by his friends, still he remained

A.H. 17.

silent. Abu 'Obeida himself embarrassed, a painful pause ensued. At last Bilal, privileged as the Muezzin of the Prophet, stepped forth, and with stentorian voice cried, *Thus and thus hath the Commander of the Faithful said, and it is incumbent on us to obey;* so saying, he unwound the kerchief from the head of Khalid, bound his hands therewith, and took his helmet off. The great warrior, to whom Islam so greatly owed its conquests, stood as a felon before the congregation. Bilal repeated the question, and Khalid at length replied, "The money was my own." At once Bilal unbound his hands, and replacing the helmet on his head, wound round the kerchief as before, and said, "We honour thee still, even as we did honour thee before, one of our chiefest captains." But Abu 'Obeida was silent; and Khalid, stunned by the disgrace, stood speechless and bewildered. Abu 'Obeida had not the heart to proclaim his deposition: but still spoke kindly to him as one who had his confidence. 'Omar, informed of what had passed, made allowance for Abu 'Obeida's delicacy, and summoned Khalid to Medina. Prompt to obey, though sore at heart, Khalid first returned to his seat of Government; and both there and at Hims, bidding adieu to his friends and people, complained of the ingratitude of the Caliph, who scrupled not to use him in times of difficulty, but cast him aside when, through his aid, he had reached the summit of his Sovereign power. Arrived in the Caliph's presence, Khalid broke out in bitter reproach:—"I swear that thou hast treated despitefully a faithful servant to whom thou owest much. I appeal from thee to the whole body of the Faithful." "Whence came that money?" was 'Omar's only answer. The question was repeated day by day; till at last, galled by the charge, Khalid made answer: "I have naught but the spoil which the Lord hath given me in the days of Abu Bekr as well as in thine own. Whatever thou findest over 60,000 pieces, hath been gained in thy Caliphate: take it if thou wilt." So his effects were valued, and the estimate reaching 80,000, 'Omar confiscated the difference. But he still affected to hold the great General in honour and regard. Accordingly, he sent a rescript to the various provinces,

Summoned to Medina,

announcing that he had deposed Khālid from his government, not because of tyranny or fraud, but because he deemed it needful to remove a stumbling-block out of the way of the people, who were tempted to put their trust in an arm of flesh, instead of looking alone to the Giver of all victory. A.H. 17. and deposed.

So closed the career of Khalid. The first beginning of 'Omar's alienation was the affair of Mālik ibn Nuweira, followed by acts of tyranny in Chaldæa which grated on his sense of clemency and justice. But these acts had long since been condoned; and therefore his conduct now was both ungenerous and unjust. He used the "Sword of God" so long as he had the need, and when victory was gained, he cast the same ungratefully away. Khālid retired to Hims, and did not long survive. His manner of life when in the full tide of prosperity, may be gathered from the brief notice that in the Plague, from which he fled with his family to the desert, he is said to have lost no fewer than forty sons. Soon after, in the eighth year of 'Omar's caliphate, he died. In his last illness he kept showing the scars which covered his body, marks of bravery and unflinching prowess. "And now," he said, "I die even as a coward dieth, or as the camel breatheth its last breath." His end illustrates forcibly the instability of this world's fame. The hero who had borne Islām aloft to the crest of victory and glory, ended his days in penury and neglect. His tomb was visited by the traveller Ibn Jubeir in 1185, and is mentioned by Yākūt (1225), as also his house. According to another account, however, Khalid died, not at Hims, but at Medina. A part of his lance was long preserved in the great Mosque of Damascus. Dies in penury and neglect, 21 A.H. 642 A.D.

CHAPTER XX

EXPULSION OF JEWS AND CHRISTIANS FROM ARABIA. REGISTER OF ARAB TRIBES. CIVIL AND MILITARY ADMINISTRATION. THE ḲOR'ĀN

14-15 A.H. 635-636 A.D.

Domestic events, 14-15 A.H. Expulsion of Jews and Christians from Arabia.

WE must now revert to one or two matters of domestic interest.

Arabia, as the nursery of legions devoted to fight for Islām, must be purged of strange religions. So soon therefore as victory was secured in Syria and Chaldæa, 'Omar proceeded to execute an act of harshness, as well as of breach of faith.

Christian inhabitants removed from Nejrān,

In the centre of Arabia lies the province of Nejrān inhabited from of old by a Christian people. Mohammad concluded a treaty with their Chiefs and Bishops, which on payment of a tribute of 2000 pieces of cloth, valued at 40 dirhems each, secured them in the undisturbed profession of their ancestral faith. Throughout the rebellion they remained loyal to their engagements, and Abu Bekr renewed the treaty. Worthy descendants of a persecuted race, they resisted the blandishments of Islam; and as a penalty they must now quit their native soil, consecrated by the ashes of their martyred forefathers.[1] They were ordered to depart and take land in exchange elsewhere, or accept a money payment. Some migrated to Syria; but the greater part settled in the vicinity of Al-Kūfa, where the colony of Nejrania long maintained the memory of their expatriation. The rights conferred by the Prophet, so far as the altered circumstances

[1] See *Life of Mohammad*, p. xcvii. For the treaty of Mohammad, p. 458.

might admit, were respected by successive Rulers; and the tribute, with decreasing numbers, lightened from time to time. Some years after, the Jews of Kheibar, a rich vale two or three days north of Medīna, met a similar fate. Their claim was not so strong; for, conquered by Mohammad, they had been left on sufferance with their fields at a rent of half the produce. In lieu of this partial right, they received a money payment, and were sent away to Syria. Various pretexts are urged for the expatriation in either case. But underlying is the dogma, founded on the supposed dying behest of Mohammad—*In Arabia there shall be no faith but the faith of Islām.* The recruiting field of Islām must be sacred ground.[1]

A.H. 14-15. and Jews from Kheibar.

The Arabian nation was the champion of Islām; and to fight its battles every Arab was jealously reserved. He must be a soldier, and nothing else. He might not settle down in any conquered lands as owner of the soil; while for merchandise or other labour, a warlike life offered little leisure. Neither was there any need. The Arabs lived on the fat of conquered provinces, and subject peoples served them. Of booty taken in war, four-fifths were distributed to the army on the field, the remaining fifth reserved for the State; and even that, after public obligations were discharged, shared among the Arabian people. In the reign of Abu Bekr this was a simple matter. But under 'Omar the spoil of Syria and of Persia, in ever-increasing volume, poured into the treasury of Medīna, where it was distributed almost as soon as received. What was easy in small beginnings, by equal sharing or discretionary preference, became now a heavy task. And there arose, also, new sources of revenue in the land assessment and poll-tax of conquered countries, the surplus of which, after defraying civil and military charges, became equally with spoil of war, patrimony of the Arab nation.

Arabs share in spoil of war and revenues of conquered lands.

At length, in the second or third year of his Caliphate, 'Omar determined that the distribution should be regulated on a fixed and systematic scale. The income of the Commonwealth was to be divided, as heretofore, amongst the Faithful as their heritage, but upon rules of precedence befitting the

New rule of distribution.

[1] *Life of Mohammad*, p. 490.

A.H. 14-15. military and theocratic groundwork of Islam. For this end three points were considered—priority of conversion, relationship to the Prophet, and military service. The widows of Mohammad,—"Mothers of the Faithful"—took precedence with an annual allowance of 10,000 pieces each:[1] and so also all his kinsmen on a scale corresponding with their affinity. The famous three hundred of Bedr had 5000 each;[2] presence at Al-Hodeibiya and the *Pledge of the Tree*[3] gave a claim to 4000; those engaged in quelling the Rebellion had 3000; those who had fought in the great battles of Syria and Chaldæa, and also sons of "the men of Bedr," had 2000; and such as took the field after the actions of Al-Kadisiya and the Yarmúk, 1000. Warriors of distinction received an extra grant of 500. And so they graduated downwards to 200 pieces for the latest levies. Nor were the households forgotten. Women had the tenth of a man's share. Wives, widows, and children had each their proper stipend; and in the register, every new-born infant had a title to be entered with an allowance of ten pieces, rising with its age. Even Arab slaves (so long as any of the blood remained in slavery) had their portion.

All other races form a lower caste.

Thus every soul was rated at its worth. But the privilege was confined to those of Arab blood. A very few exceptions there were of distinguished Persian chiefs; but their mention only proves the stringency of the rule. The whole nation, man, woman, and child, of the militant Arab race, was subsidised. In theory, the rights of all Believers of what blood soever are the same. "Ye are one brotherhood," said Mohammad at the Farewell pilgrimage; and as he spoke, he placed his two forefingers one upon the other, to enforce the absolute equality ruling in Islam.[4] But in point of fact, the equality was limited to the Arab nation. The right of any brother of alien race was but a dole of food sufficient for subsistence, and no more.

'Omar's rule disarms Arab jealousies.

A people dividing amongst them the whole revenues, spoil, and conquests of the State, on the basis of an equal

[1] 'Aisha was allotted 2000 extra, "for the love the Prophet bare her," but some say she declined it. Mohammad's two slave-concubines were at first rated only at 6000; but at the desire of the other widows were placed on an equality with them. The grandsons had 5000 each.

[2] *Life of Mohammad*, p. 234. [3] *Ibid.* pp. 358, 416.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 473.

brotherhood, is a spectacle probably without parallel in the world. The distinction also of early conversion was well conceived. In no other way could the susceptibilities of tribal rivalry have been reconciled. The proud chiefs of Koreish, who did not join the Prophet till after the fall of Mecca, refused any allowance but the highest: "We know of none nobler than ourselves," they said; "and less than other we will not take." "Not so," answered 'Omar; "I give it by priority of faith, and not for noble birth." "It is well," they replied; and no reason but this would have satisfied them. There were two further sources of danger: first, the rivalry between the Bedawi tribes and the "Companions" or men of Mecca and Medīna; and, second, the jealousies that sprang up between the house of Hashim (the Prophet's kinsman) on the one hand, and the Umeiyads and other branches of Koreish on the other;—jealousies which by and by developed into larger proportions, and threatened the very existence of the Caliphate; but which, held in check by 'Omar, were now for a time allayed by assuming an acknowledged test as the ground of precedence. A.H. 14-15.

Arabs the aristocracy of the Muslim world.

The blue blood of Arabia was universally recognised as the aristocracy of the Muslim world. Rank and stipend now assigned, and even rewards for special gallantry in the field, descended by inheritance. Implied in this inheritance was the continuing obligation to fight for the Faith: by it martial genius was maintained, and employment perpetuated for the standing army of the Caliphate. A nation composed thus of ennobled soldiery, pampered, factious and turbulent, formed too often a dangerous element of sedition and intrigue. But, nevertheless, it was the real backbone of Islam, the secret of conquest, the stay of the Caliphate. Crowded harims multiplied the race with marvellous rapidity. The progeny of the Arab sire (whatever the mother) was kept sedulously distinct, so as never to mingle with the conquered races. Wherever Arabs went they formed a class apart and dominant,—the nobles and rulers of the land. Subject peoples, even if they embraced Islam, were of a lower caste; they could aspire to nothing higher than, as "clients" of some Arab chief or tribe, to court patronage and protection. Thus the Arabians set themselves apart, as a nation militant, for the sacred task of propagating Islam. Even after the

A.H. 14-15. new-born zeal of the Faith had evaporated, the chivalry of the Arabs as a race wholly devoted to arms, was, owing mainly to 'Omar's foresight, maintained in full activity for two centuries and a half. The Nation was, and continued to be, an army mobilised; the camp, and not the city, their home; their business, arms;—a people whose calling it was to be ready for warlike expedition at a moment's notice.

Register of all Arabs entitled to stipend.

To carry out this vast design, a Register was kept of every man, woman, and child entitled to a stipend from the State—in other words, of the whole Arab race employed in the interests of Islam. This was easy enough for the upper ranks, but a herculean task for the hundreds of thousands of ordinary families which kept streaming forth to war from the Peninsula, and which, by free indulgence in polygamy, were multiplying rapidly. The task, however, was simplified by the strictly tribal disposition of the forces. Men of a tribe fought together; and the several Corps and Brigades being thus territorially arranged in clans, the register assumed the same form. Every soul was entered under the tribe and clan whose lineage it claimed. And to this exhaustive classification we owe the elaborate, and to some extent artificial, genealogies and tribal traditions of Arabia before Islām.

The *Dīwān* of 'Omar.

The roll itself, as well as the office for its maintenance and for pensionary account, was called the *Dīwān* or Exchequer. The State had by this time an income swollen by tribute of conquered cities, poll-tax of subjugated peoples, land assessments, spoil of war, and tithes. The first charge was for the revenue and civil administration; the next for military requirements, which soon assumed a sustained and permanent form; the surplus was for the support of the Nation. The entire revenues of Islam were thus expended as soon almost as received; and 'Omar took special pride in seeing the treasury emptied to the last dirhem. The accounts of the various provinces were at the first kept by natives of the country in the character to which they were accustomed—in Syria by Greeks, and in Chaldæa by Persians. At Al-Kūfa this lasted till the time of Al-Hajjāj, when, an Arab assistant having learnt the art, the Arabic system of record and notation was introduced.

We are not told the number enrolled on the Diwān of 'Omar, but the population of Al-Kūfa and Al-Baṣra may give us some idea of the vast exodus in progress from Arabia, and the rapid strides by which the crowded ḥarīms multiplied the race. Arab ladies, as a rule, married only Arab husbands; but the other sex, besides unlimited concubinage with slave-girls, were free to contract marriage with the women of conquered lands, whether converts or "People of the Book." And although wives of Arab blood took precedence in virtue of rank and birth, the children of every Arab father, whether the mother were slave or free, Muslim, Jew, or Christian, were equal in legitimacy. And so the nation multiplied. Looking also to the further drain upon Arabia to meet continuing war, we shall not greatly err if we assume that before 'Omar's death the Arabs beyond the limits of Arabia proper numbered half a million, and before long were doubled, and perhaps quadrupled.

A.H. 14-15.

Vastness of Arab exodus.

Civil administration followed close on conquest. In Chaldæa, the great network of canals was early taken in hand. The long-neglected embankments of the Tigris and Euphrates were placed under special officers; Syria and Al-'Irāḳ were measured field by field; and the assessment established on a uniform basis. In Al-'Irāḳ, the agency of the great landholders was taken advantage of, as under the previous dynasty, for the maintenance of order and collection of the revenue. In addition to the armies in the field, a reserve of cavalry was maintained at the headquarters of the several provinces, ready for emergency. The corps at Al-Kufa numbered 4000 lances, and there were eight such centres. Reserves for forage were also set apart. The cost of these measures formed a first charge upon provincial revenue.

Provincial administration.

Reserves of cavalry.

The "Collection" of the Ḳor'an—that is, gathering into one the various "Revelations" of Mohammad—belongs to the early years of this reign. The task was already begun by Abu Bekr, at the instance of 'Omar himself, who, seeing that many of the "Readers" (those who had the Ḳor'an by heart) had perished at the "Garden of Death," feared lest otherwise "much of the sacred text might be lost." The duty was assigned to Zeid ibn Thabit, who, as well as others, had from time to time taken down passages direct from

Ḳor'ān, how collected.

A.H. 14 15. Mohammad's dictation. Many of the "Suras," or chapters, were already used privately, and for the public services, in a complete and settled form. In addition, Zeid now sought out from every possible quarter whatever had at any time emanated from the Prophet, in the way of revelation, from the earliest period of his ministry—"whether inscribed on date-leaves, shreds of leather, shoulder-blades, stony tablets, or the hearts of men." Having gathered exhaustively the diverse and often fugitive materials, he carefully and with reverent hand dovetailed them together, just as they were found, in continuous form. A certain regard to time and subject was no doubt observed in the pious task, but still evidently with a good deal of haphazard collocation; and to this may be ascribed much of the obscurity and incoherence that occasionally pervade the sacred text. The original manuscript thus completed was committed to Hafsa, 'Omar's daughter, one of the Prophet's widows, and continued to be the standard text until the time of 'Othmān.

CHAPTER XXI

FAMINE AND PLAGUE

18 A.H. 639 A.D.

The *Year of Ashes*, 18 A.H. 639 A.D.

THE fifth year of 'Omar's Caliphate was darkened by the double calamity of pestilence and famine. It is called "The Year of Ashes," for the dry air of the Hijáz was so charged with unslaked dust from the parched and sandy soil as to obscure the light of heaven by a thick and sultry haze.

Famine in Arabia.

In the northern half of the Peninsula the drought was so severe that Nature languished. Wild and timid creatures of the desert, tamed by want, came seeking food at the hand of man. Flocks and herds died of starvation, or became too attenuated for human food. Markets were deserted, and the people suffered extremities like those of a garrison long besieged. Crowds of Bedawin, driven by hunger, flocked to Medina, and aggravated the distress. 'Omar, with characteristic self-denial, refused any indulgence not shared with those about him. He swore that he would taste neither meat nor butter, nor even milk, until the people had food enough and to spare. On one occasion his servant obtained at a great price a skin filled with milk, and another with butter. 'Omar sent both away in alms. "I will not eat," he said, "of that which costeth much; for how then should I know the trouble of my people, if I suffer not even as they?" From coarse fare and oil-olive instead of milk and butter, the Caliph's countenance, naturally fresh and bright, became sallow and haggard.

Grain imported from Syria and elsewhere.

Every effort was made to alleviate distress, and effective aid at last came from abroad. Abu 'Obeida brought 4000 beasts of burden laden with corn from Syria, which he

A.H. 18. distributed himself amongst the famished people. 'Amr despatched food from Palestine by camels, and also by shipping from the port of Ayla. Supplies came likewise from Chaldæa. The beasts that bore the burden were slain by twenties daily, and served, together with their freight, to feed the citizens of Medina. After nine months of sore trial, a solemn Assembly was called by 'Omar; and in answer (we are told) to a prayer offered up by Al-'Abbas, the Prophet's aged uncle, the heavens were overcast and rain descending in heavy showers drenched the land. Grass sprang rapidly, the Bedawin were sent back to their pasture-lands, and plenty again prevailed. Out of the calamity there grew a permanent traffic with the north, and the markets of the Hijaz continued long to be supplied from Syria, and eventually by sea from Egypt.

Plague of 'Amwas.

The famine was followed, but in a different region, by an evil of still greater magnitude. The plague broke out in Syria: from the town at which it began (Emmaus) it was called the plague of 'Amwas; and, attacking with special virulence the Arabs at Hims and Damascus, devastated the whole province. Crossing the desert, it spread even as far as Al-Basra. Consternation seized every rank. High and low fell equally before the scourge. Men were struck down and died as by a sudden blow. 'Omar's first impulse was to summon Abu 'Obeida to Medina for the time, lest he too should fall a victim to the fell disease. Knowing his chivalrous spirit, 'Omar veiled the purpose, and simply ordered him to come "on an urgent affair." Abu 'Obeida divined the cause, and choosing rather to share the danger with his people, begged to be excused. 'Omar, as he read the answer, burst into tears. "Is Abu 'Obeida dead?" they asked. "No, he is not dead," said 'Omar, "but it is as if he were." The Caliph then set out himself for Syria, but not far from Tebuk he was met by Abu 'Obeida and others from the scene of the disaster. A council was called, and 'Omar yielded to the wish of the majority that he should return home again. "What," cried some of his courtiers, "and flee from the decree of God?" "Yea," replied the Caliph, wiser than they,—"if we flee, it is but from the decree of God unto the decree of God." He then commanded Abu 'Obeida to carry the Arab population in a body out of the

'Omar holds Council on Syrian border.

infected cities into the desert; and himself wended his way back to Medīna.[1] A.H. 18.

Acting on the Caliph's wish, Abu 'Obeida lost no time in making the people fly to the high lands of the Ḥaurān. He had reached as far as Al-Jabiya, when he too was struck down, and with his son fell a victim to the pestilence. Mo'ādh ibn Jebel, designated to succeed, died almost immediately after; and it was left for 'Amr to lead the panic-stricken folks to the hill-country, where the pestilence abated. Shurahbīl ibn Ḥasana also fell a victim—it is said on the same day as Abu 'Obeida. Yezīd, son of Abu Sufyān, also perished.[2] Not less that five-and-twenty thousand perished in the visitation. Of a single family which had emigrated seventy in number from Medina, but four were left. Such was the deadliness of the scourge.

Arabs fly to Ḥaurān.

Death of Abu 'Obeida.

The country was disabled, and fears were entertained of an attack from the Roman armies. The terrible extent of the calamity showed itself in another way. A vast amount of property was left by the dead, and the gaps amongst the survivors caused much embarrassment in the succeeding claims. The difficulty grew so serious, that to settle this and other matters 'Omar resolved on making a progress through his dominions. At first he thought of visiting Chaldæa, and thence by Mesopotamia, entering Syria from the north; but he abandoned the larger project, and confining his resolution to Syria, took the usual route. The way lay through the Christian town of Ayla, at the head of the Gulf of Akaba; and his visit here brings out well the

'Omar's journey to Syria, autumn, 18 A.H. 639 A.H.

[1] During the discussion 'Abd ar-Raḥmān quoted a saying of Moḥammad: "If pestilence break out in a land, go not thither; if thou art there, flee not from it." 'Omar's views were more reasonable, and he justified them by this illustration:—"Suppose (he said) that ye alight in a valley, whereof one side is green with pasture, and the other bare and barren, whichever side ye let loose your camels upon, it would be by the decree of God; but ye would choose the brow that was green." And so he judged that in removing the people from the scene of danger to a healthier locality, he was making no attempt to flee from the decree of God.

[2] The tombs of these three great men are places of pious pilgrimage down to the present day. That of Abu 'Obeida is at 'Amta in the Jordan valley, that of Shurahbil near the Wadi Yabis, and that of Mo'adh also in the Ghaur of Beisan.—Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria*, p. 345 f. As to Yezîd, see p. 143.

A.H. 18.

Visits the Bishop of Ayla.

simplicity and kindly feeling which he evinced toward his Christian subjects. He rode on a camel with small pomp and following; and, minded to enter the village unrecognised, changed places with his servant, putting him in front. "Where is the Amir?" cried the eager citizens, streaming forth to witness the Caliph's advent. "He is *before* you," replied 'Omar with double meaning, as the camel moved slowly on. So the crowd hurried forward, thinking that the great Ruler was still beyond, and left 'Omar to alight unobserved at the house of the Bishop, with whom he lodged during the heat of the day. His coat, rent upon the journey, was given to his host to mend. This the Bishop not only did, but had a lighter garment made for him, more suited to the oppressive travel of the season. 'Omar, however, preferred to wear his own.

'Omar in Syria.

Proceeding onwards, the Caliph made the circuit of Syria. He visited the chief Muslim settlements, gave instructions for the disposal of the estates of the multitudes swept away by the plague, and himself decided doubtful claims. As both Abu 'Obeida and Yezid had perished in the pestilence, 'Omar now appointed Mu'awiya, another son of Abu Sufyan, to the chief command in Syria, and thus laid the foundation of the Umeiyad dynasty. Mu'awiya was a man of unbounded ambition, but wise and able withal; and he turned to good account his new position. The factions which glorified the claims of 'Ali and Al-'Abbas, and spurned the Umeiyad blood of Mu'awiya, were yet unknown. Both 'Ali and Al-'Abbas had hitherto remained inactive at Medina. The latter, always weak and wavering, was now enfeebled by old age. The former, honoured, indeed, as the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, and also for his wit and wisdom, was amongst the trusted counsellors of the Caliph, but possessed no special power or influence, or any apparent ambition beyond a life of quiet indulgence in the charms of a harim, varied ever and anon by fresh arrivals. Neither is there any reason to suppose that the bygone opposition to Islam of Abu Sufyan and Hind, parents of Mu'awiya, was now remembered against them. Sins preceding conversion, if followed by a consistent profession, left no stain upon the Believer. It was not till the fires of civil strife burst forth that abuse was heaped

Appoints Mu'awiya governor.

upon the Umeiyad race for ancient misdeeds and enmity towards the Prophet, and political capital made of them. The accession, therefore, of Mu'āwiya at the present time to the chief command in Syria excited no jealousy or opposition. It passed, indeed, as a thing of course, without remark. A.H. 18.

Bilāl performs office of Muëzzin.

As 'Omar prepared to take final leave of Syria, a scene occurred which stirred to their depths the hearts of the Faithful. It was the voice of Bilāl, the Muëzzin of the Prophet, proclaiming the hour of prayer. The stentorian call of the aged African had not been heard since the death of Mohammad; for he refused to perform the duty for any other. He followed the army to Syria, and there, honoured for the office he had so long discharged at Medina, lived in retirement. The Chief citizens of Damascus now petitioned 'Omar that on this last occasion, Bilāl should be asked once more to perform the Call to Prayer. The aged man consented, and as from the top of the Great Mosque the well-known voice arose clear and loud with the accustomed cry, the whole assembly, recalling vividly the Prophet at daily prayers, was melted into tears, and strong warriors, with 'Omar at their head, lifted up their voices and sobbed aloud. Bilāl died two years after.[1]

Pilgrimage, xii. 18 A.H. Dec. 639 A.D.

On returning to Medina, 'Omar set out on the annual Pilgrimage to Mecca, at which he presided every year of his Caliphate. But this was the last journey which he made beyond the limits of Arabia.

[1] For Bilāl and his office of Muëzzin, see *Life of Mohammad*, p. 196.

CHAPTER XXII

CONQUEST OF EGYPT[1]

19-20 A.H. 640-641 A.D.

19 A.H. 640 A.D.

THE year following was one of comparative repose. Islam continued to push its way now steadily into Persia. Reserving the advance in that direction, we will first narrate the conquest of Egypt.

'Amr casts an eye on Egypt.

The project was, it is said, due to 'Amr, who had made trading expeditions in the country in his

[1] The chief authorities for the Muslim conquest of Egypt are the contemporary chronicle of the Copt John of Nikiu, a number of papyri dating from that period in the collection of the Archduke Rainer, the contemporary and later accounts preserved by the early Arab historians Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam (d. 268 A.H.), Al-Balâdhuri (d. 279 A.H., 892 A.D.), and Ṭabari (d. 310 A.H., 923 A.D.), as well as the later Ibn al-Athîr (d. 630 A.H., 1233 A.D.), Al-Maḳrîzi (d. 845 A.H., 1442 A.D.), As-Suyûṭi (d. 911 A.H., 1505 A.D.), and many others.

The value of the Chronicle of John of Nikiu (of which the text with a French translation will be found in *Notices et Extraits des MSS. de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, vol. xxiv.) is diminished by the fact that it is extant only in an Ethiopic version made in the year 1602, from an ancient Arabic translation, the original having been composed in Greek, with some chapters in Coptic. Moreover, in the narrative itself the events do not appear to follow the order of time.

The Papyri of the Rainer Collection have been published by Prof. Karabacek in the *Denkschriften* and *Sitzungsberichte* of the Vienna Academy, as well as in the *Mittheilungen*.

The question of the sequence of events in the Conquest of Egypt has been discussed and, as far as practicable, settled by Mr E. W. Brooks in the *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 1895, p. 436 ff. The Arab historians are fully awake to the confusion which exists (Ṭab. i. 2580). Ibn al-Athir attempts to find one fixed point by stating that the conquest of Miṣr must in any case have been before the Year of Ashes (see p. 153), since in that year 'Amr sent supplies by way of Suez to Medina by sea, but he wisely adds that God knoweth best (ii., 440. *Cf.* Ṭab. i. 2577).

heathen days. After the fall of Cæsarea, the able and ambitious general chafed at a life of inaction in Palestine. On the Caliph's visit to Syria, he urged a descent upon Egypt, at once to enfeeble the enemy's power and augment their own. The advice was good; for Egypt, once the granary of Rome, now fed Constantinople with corn. Alexandria, though inhabited largely by natives, drew its population from every quarter. It was the second city in the Empire, the seat of commerce, luxury, and letters. Greeks and Armenians, Arabs and Copts, Christians, Jews, and Syrians, mingled here on common ground. But the life was essentially Byzantine; although the government was ever and anon interrupted by revolt and by the uprising of the native Egyptians, both among themselves, and against their foreign rulers. The vast population was provided, in unexampled profusion, with theatres, baths, and places of amusement.[1] A forest of ships congregated in its safe and spacious harbour, from whence communication was maintained with all the seaports of the realm. Alexandria was thus a European, rather than an Egyptian, city. A.H. 19-20.

Egypt disaffected towards Byzantine rule.

It was otherwise with the rich valley beyond. Emerging from the luxurious city, the traveller dropped at once from the pinnacle of civilisation to the dreary wastes of Monasticism, and the depths of poverty and squalor. Egypt was then, as ever, the servant of nations. The overflowing produce of well-watered fields served but to feed the great cities of the empire. And the people of the soil, ground down by exaction and oppression, were ever ready to rise against their rulers. Hatred was embittered here, as elsewhere, by the never-ceasing endeavour of the Byzantine rulers to convert the inhabitants to Orthodoxy, while the Copts held tenaciously by the Monophysite creed.[2] No sooner had Egypt been evacuated by the Persians, who had occupied it for some

[1] The male population alone is given at 600,000. There were 70,000 (according to others 40,000) male Jews of an age to pay the poll-tax, and 200,000 Greeks, of whom 30,000 effected their escape by sea before the siege; 4000 baths, 400 theatres, and 12,000 vessels of various size. These numbers are no doubt exaggerated.

[2] See Palmer's *Origines Liturgicæ*, vol. i., p. 82; and *The Story of the Church of Egypt*, vol. i., noticed below.

A.H. 19-20. ten or twelve years, and whose rule, here as elsewhere, had, after the rigours of the conquest were over, been marked by a fair amount of toleration, than persecution recommenced with the return of its former masters. Cyrus, the instrument chosen by Heraclius to carry out in Egypt his scheme for the union of the Church on the basis of the Monothelite compromise, arrived at Alexandria about the year 630, in the double capacity of ecclesiastical and civil ruler of Egypt. The Coptic Patriarch Benjamin at once fled to Upper Egypt and concealed himself in a monastery there, and advised his clergy to follow his example. For ten years Cyrus strove by persecution to force the Copts to abandon the Jacobite creed for that of Chalcedon.[1] Chronic disaffection pervaded the land, and the people courted deliverance from the overbearance of Byzantine rule. The Romans themselves were divided into the Blue and Green parties here as elsewhere, and the military chiefs were at feud with one another. There were, indeed, at the time in Egypt no Bedawi tribes with Arabian sympathies for Muslim conquest; but elements of even greater danger had long been here at work, which made the change of yoke at first sight not unwelcome.

'Amr invades Egypt, 19 A.H. 640 A.D.

It was at the close of the eighteenth year of the Hijra that 'Amr, having obtained the hesitating consent of the Caliph, set out from Palestine for Egypt. His army, even with bands of Bedawin, lured on the way by hope of plunder, did not exceed 4000. Soon after he had left, 'Omar, who had meanwhile returned to Medina, concerned at the smallness of his force, would have recalled him; but finding that he was already gone too far, sent Az-Zubeir with heavy reinforcements after him, many of them veterans and warriors of renown.

Reduces Lower Egypt.

'Amr entered Egypt by the Wadi al-'Arish, where he was on the 12th December 630 (10. xii., 18 A.H.). Pushing westwards he reached Al-Farama (Pelusium), in the siege and capture of which a month was spent. Following up the eastern estuary of the Nile he occupied Bilbeis. Marching along the course of the river, now almost at its lowest,

[1] Renaudot, *Historia Patriarcharum Alexandrinorum Jacobitarum—Benjamin Patriarcha.*

amidst groves of fig-tree and acacia, 'Amr reached at last the obelisks and ruined temples of 'Ain Shems ('Aun or Heliopolis). On the way he routed several columns sent to arrest the inroad; amongst them one commanded by his Syrian antagonist Arṭabūn, who was, it is said, slain in the encounter. A.H. 19-20.

Battle of Heliopolis.

From Heliopolis 'Amr crossed the Nile and (according to John of Nikiu) made a flying raid into the Faiyūm (Lake Mœris), and it appears to have been only on his return to the neighbourhood of Heliopolis that he was joined by the reinforcements which 'Omar had sent after him under the command of Az-Zubeir. These may have brought his forces up to 15,000. The people of 'Ain Shems, mixed Copts and Nubians, now urged the Governor of Egypt, whom the Arab writers call the Muḳauḳis,[1] to make peace and not expose them to destruction. "What chance," they said, "have we against men that have beaten both the Chosroes and the Kaiser?" An armistice of five days was agreed upon,[2] but as soon as it had expired, an action took place. 'Amr adopted the familiar plan of dividing his forces into three parts, one stationed near Heliopolis, one to the north of the Roman fortress of Babylon, and one near a place on the Nile called Ṭendūnyas or Um Dunein. When the Roman generals attacked the first, which was commanded by 'Amr, the other divisions fell on their rear. The victory of the Arabs was complete. The Romans took to their boats and fled down the river. The battle of Heliopolis took place in July 640 (viii., 19 A.H.).

By this victory the City of Miṣr (Memphis), in which

[1] This name is generally derived from the Greek μεγαυχής, vain-glorious. That it is a title, not a proper name, appears from the fact that it is used also of the governor of Egypt in the lifetime of Moḥammad (Muir's *Life of Moḥammad*, 4th ed., p. 371). See Mrs E. L. Butcher, *The Story of the Church in Egypt*, vol. i., chap. xxxii. A. J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt*, considers it to be a nickname of Cyrus, a view which is taken for granted in the 11th ed. of the *Encycl. Brit.* On the other side, see *The Athenæum* for 1903, vol. i., p. 455 f.

[2] Ṭabari (i. 2584) says that the Muḳauḳis sent Abu Maryām, "catholicus of Egypt," with "the bishop" [Abu Maryām] and the religious folk, who concluded a truce of five days. Arṭabun, however, would not agree to it. One of those who accepted Islam was called Abu Maryām, according to what professes to be the narrative of a soldier who served under 'Amr (i. 2583).

A.H. 19-20. the fort called Babylon was situated, fell into 'Amr's hands, and the whole of Lower Egypt would have been at once overrun had not Nature come to the help of the vanquished. The Nile, which begins to rise early in June, in those days by the middle of August transformed the whole Delta into one vast lake, rendering military operations impossible. 'Amr therefore made use of the period of inundation, which lasts till near the close of the year, by investing the fort of Babylon, which was considered impregnable. The siege, begun in September 640, lasted some eight months. As in the case of Damascus, the fortress was taken both by capitulation and by assault. Whilst Az-Zubeir with desperate valour had successfully scaled the walls, a deputation from the garrison obtained terms from 'Amr [Tab. i. 2588 f.]. The fortress of Babylon fell on Easter Monday, 6th April 641. The Emperor Heraclius had died, whilst the siege was in progress, on the 11th February of the same year.[1]

Opposition was now almost at an end. The Greeks, whom Gibbon scruples to call Romans, fallen now to the level of those over whom they used to domineer, and hated by them, were glad to make their escape towards the sea-coast. The Copts now began actively to take sides with the Arabs and massacre the Imperial soldiery. 'Amr's first care was to secure the Faiyum, his next to throw a bridge of boats across the Nile, and this not only facilitated the transport of his own followers, but cut the stream of fugitives from Upper Egypt, which was constantly flowing down the valley towards Alexandria. Taking full advantage of the rivalries of Roman and Copt, 'Amr, leaving a garrison in Babylon, lost no time in marching with mounted troops upon Alexandria, where the Imperial commander-in-chief, Theodore, had his headquarters, so as to reach it before the Greek troops could rally there for its defence. On the way he captured Nikiu, in which many fugitives, amongst others the governor of the Faiyum, had taken refuge, on the 13th of May 641 (*John of Nikiu*, p. 568). Although the fugitive governor of the Faiyum, who was in command of the town, had fled and the garrison had, with one exception, laid down their arms, the

[1] In the Arabic histories Heliopolis and Babylon appear to be confused with one another. Butler explains this as due to their taking Bāb al-Yūn = Gate of 'Aun (On or Heliopolis).

inhabitants, non-combatants, women and children, were put to the sword. Similar scenes were enacted in other towns. In spite of considerable resistance at points, 'Amr worked his way as far as Kiryaun, some sixteen miles east of Alexandria. Here Theodore gave battle, but was forced to retire within the city, before which the Arabs encamped, just out of range of the catapults mounted behind the walls, which it was futile for the Arabs to think of assaulting. The stretch of wall on the land side was indeed as narrow as it was well fortified, and succour and supplies could always be obtained by sea. But, as may be imagined, the contention of factions within the city, filled as it was with fugitive generals, and in the absence of Cyrus, who had been recalled, had reached a climax (*John of Nikiu*, p. 568 f.). A.H. 19-20.

All parties, however, even the Copts whom he had persecuted, united in welcoming Cyrus back in the following September, when he came empowered to make peace with the Muslims; and in the autumn of the year 641 Egypt passed from the hands of the Emperor into those of the followers of the Arabian Prophet, with whom it has remained for over 1200 years.[1]

'Amr wished to fix his seat of government at Alexandria, but 'Omar would not allow him to remain so far away from his camp. So he returned to Upper Egypt. For several years his followers were engaged against the Nubians, and at last brought them under subjection in the direction of Dongola. A body of the Arabs crossed the Nile and settled in Ghizeh, on the western bank,—a movement which 'Omar permitted only on condition that a strong fortress was constructed there to prevent the possibility of surprise. The headquarters of the army were pitched near Memphis. Around them grew up a military station, called from its origin *Fusṭāṭ*, the *fossatum* or "Encampment." It expanded rapidly into the Capital of Egypt, the modern Cairo. And there 'Amr laid the foundation of a great Mosque on the site of that which still bears his name.[2] Fusṭāṭ.

[1] The treaty was concluded between Cyrus and 'Amr at Babylon (*John of Nikiu*, p. 575). E. W. Brooks, following John of Nikiu, dates the capitulation of Alexandria 17th October 641. (Tab. i., 2588 f.).

[2] An interesting history of the Mosque, with illustrations, appears in the *Asiatic Journal* for October 1890, p. 759. 'Amr is there described, from a tradition of Al-Makrizi, as "a short thick-set man with a large

A.H. 19-20.

Soil left with the cultivators.

Az Zubeir urged 'Amr to enforce the right of conquest, and divide the land among his followers. 'Amr refused; and the Caliph confirmed the judgment. "Leave it," was his wise reply, "in the people's hands, to nurse and fructify." 'Amr himself was refused ground whereon to build a mansion for himself. He had a dwelling-place, the Caliph reminded him, at Medina, and that should suffice. So the land of Egypt, left in the hands of its ancestral occupants, became a rich granary for Arabia, just as in bygone times it had been the granary of the Roman empire.

Suez Canal. Reopened, 21 A.H. 642 A.D.

A memorable work, set on foot by 'Amr after his return to Fustat, facilitated the transport of corn from Egypt to the Hijaz. It was nothing less than the reopening of the ancient communication between the waters of the Nile in Upper Egypt and those of the Red Sea at Suez.[1] The channel left the eastern branch of the river at Bilbeis, then turned to the right, and, striking the salt lakes near Timsah, reached the Red Sea by what is now the lower portion of the Suez Canal. Long disused, the bed was choked with silt; but the obstructions could not have been very formidable, for within a year navigation was restored, and the Caliph, at Yenbo' (the port of Medina), witnessed vessels discharge their burdens which had been freighted under the very shadow of the Pyramids. The canal remained navigable for some eighty years, when, choked with sand, it was again abandoned.

Nothing could show how well disposed 'Amr was towards the native Egyptians better than the fact that, as soon as the Greek dominions had been overthrown, he caused search

head and black eyes, and a good-humoured expression." The tradition adds a sermon given by 'Amr in this Mosque, which, of course, like much else that we read about this campaign, is mere fiction.

[1] A canal connecting the Nile near Bubastis with Lake Timsah already existed under Rameses II. *Herod.* ii., p. 158. Pharaoh Necho attempted to continue this canal southwards to the Red Sea. The design was completed by Darius a century later. A second canal was made by the Ptolemies at Tell Fakus, nearer to the Mediterranean. This took the line of lagoons (the modern fresh-water canal) to the Red Sea, and was too shallow to be of much use, excepting in high flood. One of these lines eventually (deepened, apparently, by Trajan, since it is called Amnis Trajanus) remained navigable to the end of the third century of our era. It was the same canal, no doubt, which was now cleared out and deepened by 'Amr.

to be made for the former head of their Church; and the patriarch Benjamin, after thirteen years' retirement, was reinstated in his office. This step was only equal in wisdom to the manner in which 'Amr had made use of the mutual hostility of Romans and Copts to advantage his own cause. A.H. 19-20.

'Amr would teach Egyptians to respect the Arabs.

Finding that the Egyptians, used to delicate and luxurious living, looked down upon the Arabs for their frugal fare, 'Amr, famed for mother-wit, chose a singular expedient to disabuse them. First he had a feast prepared of slaughtered camels, after the Bedawi fashion, and the Egyptians looked on with wonder while the army satisfied their hunger with the rude repast. Next day a sumptuous banquet was set out, with all the dainties of the Egyptian table; here again the warriors fell to with equal zest. On the third day the troops were paraded in battle array, when 'Amr thus addressed the crowds who flocked to the spectacle:—"The first day's entertainment was to let you see the simple manner of our life at home; the second, to show that we can enjoy the good things of the conquered lands, and yet retain, as ye see this day, our martial vigour notwithstanding." The Copts retired, saying one to the other, "See ye not that the Arabs have but to raise their heel upon us, and it is enough." 'Omar was delighted at his lieutenant's device, and said of him, "Of a truth it is on wisdom and resolve, as well as upon force, that warfare doth depend."[1]

Fable of maiden sacrifice to Nile.

A curious tale is told of the rising of the Nile. The yearly flood having been long delayed, the Copts, according to custom, sought leave to cast into the river a maiden beautifully attired, or rather, as we may suppose, the effigy of such a one.[2] When referred to, the Caliph inclosed this singular letter in a despatch to 'Amr:—

> The Commander of the Faithful to the River Nile, greeting.
>
> If in times past thou hast risen of thine own will, then stay thy flood; but if by will of Almighty God, then to Him we pray that thy waters may rise and overspread the land.

[1] Tab. i., 2590 f.

[2] The tradition is not given by our early authorities, but may nevertheless be grounded on fact, for Lane tells us it is the custom to cast year by year such a figure into the river, calling it *The Bride of the Nile.* (*Modern Egyptians*, xxvi.)

A.H. 19-20. "Cast this letter," wrote the Caliph, "into the stream, and it is enough." It was done, and the fertilising tide began to rise abundantly!

Alexandria retaken; finally reduced, 25 A.H. 646 A.D.

'Amr, with the restless spirit of the Faith, soon pushed his conquests westward, established himself in Barka, and reached even to Tripoli. The subject races were taxed in fixed tribute of Berber slaves, thus early sanctioning in that unhappy land traffic in human flesh and blood. The maritime settlements received little aid from the Byzantine fleets. But a few years after, in the Caliphate of 'Othman, a desperate attempt was made to regain possession of Alexandria. The Muslims, busy with their conquests elsewhere, had left the city insufficiently protected. The Greek and other inhabitants, already weary of the Muslim rule, conspired with the Byzantine Court; and a fleet of 300 ships, under command of Manuel, drove out the garrison and took possession of the city. 'Amr hastened to its rescue. A great battle was fought outside the walls: the Greeks were defeated, and the town subjected to the miseries of a siege. It was at last taken by storm and given up to plunder. To obviate the recurrence of similar mishap, 'Amr razed the fortifications, and quartered in the vicinity a strong garrison, which twice a year was relieved from Upper Egypt. The Muslim court was transferred to Fostat, and Alexandria ceased to be the capital of Egypt. A reminiscence of the fact that Alexandria underwent two investments (one of which ended in a capitulation, the other in its capture) is preserved in the divergent dates given by the Arab historians for the one siege which they know of—20 A.H. and 25 A.H. The story of the burning of the library of Alexandria by the Arabs is a late invention.

Within Egypt, as outside of it, the Arabs maintained the divisions of the country which they found already existing. The largest division of both Upper and Lower Egypt was into eparchies, each under a dux. The Frontier is, as elsewhere, specially mentioned. But more important were the smaller pagarchies, roughly answering to the ancient nomes, each under a pagarch, who was frequently an Arab; and lastly, the village communities under their headmen. Under Roman rule the great landowner (who was often the pagarch) often enjoyed the privilege of paying

his taxes directly to headquarters, but this and other abuses seem to have been abolished by the Arabs. The governor did not come into contact with the individual taxpayer at all, but only with the pagarch, and, by letters sent through him, with the headmen. Their administration is marked by simplicity and extreme centralisation. A.H. 19-20.

Much light has been thrown upon the character of the Arab government of Egypt by the Papyri discovered in recent years. Especially is this the case with regard to taxation. Registers were kept in every *chorion* (village community) of all persons subject to taxation. When men or money or goods were required, a requisition was sent from the governor at Fustaṭ to each pagarchy (or nome) stating the amount demanded of it, and of each of its *choria*. The local officials then collected the assessment from the individual tax-payers according to their property in land, date-palms, vines, or acacias, or according to their trade. The ordinary taxes consisted of a money-tax and a corn-tax. The money-taxes were land-tax, poll-tax, and taxes to defray the expenses of collecting these. The poll-tax was on heads of families only; the land-tax on both men and women. To equalise matters there was a special tax for those engaged in trades. The corn-tax consisted, as a rule, of wheat, sometimes of barley. In addition to these, personal service was sometimes demanded by the government. This was not the *corvée* or forced labour, for those impressed received wages. A common demand was for sailors, and for this persons of all trades and callings were taken. The bulk of the ordinary taxation went for the support of the Arabs resident in Egypt; but there were also extraordinary taxes for special purposes. A demand might be made upon a pagarchy for so many palm-tree trunks for building. There was also the obligation to find food and fodder for Arab soldiers on the march for three days. The Arab historians in dealing with this early period already speak of *kharāj* and *jizya*, but these two terms are quite synonymous, and denote revenue, however it was raised.[1] Fiscal matters.

[1] H. I. Bell, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, p. xvii. ff.

CHAPTER XXIII

ADVANCE ON THE SOUTH OF PERSIA. AL-HORMUZÁN TAKEN PRISONER

16-20 A.H. 637-641 A.D.

Barrier fixed by 'Omar eastward.

TURNING once more to the eastern provinces of the Caliphate, we find the cautious policy of 'Omar still tending to restrain the Muslim arms within the limits of the Arabian 'Iraḳ, or the country bounded by the western slopes of the Persian range. But they were soon, by the force of events, to burst the barrier.

Situation in Lower 'Iraḳ.

To the north of Al-Medáin, the Muslim border was securely defended by Holwán and other strongholds planted along the hilly range. In Lower 'Iraḳ, 'Otba had, after repeated encounters, established himself at Al-Basra, from whence he held securely the country at the head of the Gulf. But the Persian satraps were still in strength at Al-Ahwaz and Ram Hormuz, within a hundred miles of him.

Governor of Bahrein attacks Persepolis.

Hostilities in this direction were precipitated by a rash and unsuccessful raid upon Istakhr (Persepolis). Al-'Ala, who had distinguished himself by crushing the rebellion in Al-Bahrein, saw with jealous eye the conquests in Al-'Iraḳ of Sa'd and 'Otba. Tempted by the nearness of the Persian shore across the narrow strait, he set on foot an expedition to seize the district lying opposite. This was done, not only without permission, but against the known unwillingness of 'Omar to trust the treacherous element. Success might have justified the project; but it fell out otherwise. The troops, landing on the Persian coast, met for a time with no check in their advance upon Istakhr. But before long they were drawn into a trap. Advancing altogether, they had neglected to secure their base, and were cut off by the

enemy from their ships. After a severe engagement, unable to disperse the gathering enemy, and turning as a last resource towards Al-Baṣra, they found the road in that direction barred. Messengers were hurried to Medina, and 'Omar, incensed with Al-'Ala for his foolhardiness, despatched an urgent command to 'Otba to relieve the beleaguered army. A force of 12,000 men set out immediately; and forming, not without difficulty, a junction with Al-'Alā, beat back the Persians, and then retired on Al-Baṣra. The troops of 'Otba gained a great name in this affair, and the special thanks of 'Omar. This expedition of Al-'Alā is known as "the First Iṣtakhar."

A.H. 16-20. Meets a check, but is relieved from Baṣra.

But the retreat, conducted with whatever skill and bravery, put heart into the hostile border. Al-Hormuzān, a Persian satrap, had escaped from Al-Ḳādisiya to his own province of Al-Ahwaz, on the lower mountain range, at no great distance from Al-Baṣra. He began now to make raids upon the Arab outposts, and 'Otba resolved to attack him. Reinforcements were obtained from Al-Kūfa, and 'Otba was fortunate enough to gain over a Bedawi tribe, which, though long settled near Al-Ahwāz, was by blood and sympathy allied to the garrison of Al-Baṣra. Thus strengthened, he dislodged the enemy from Al-Ahwāz, and drove him across the Karūn River. A truce was called; and Al-Ahwāz, ceded to the Muslims, was placed by 'Otba in the hands of his Bedawi allies. After one of his victories, the girdle of the defeated Marzuban, or Persian warden of the marches, was sent as a trophy to the Caliph. The envoy, pressed by 'Omar, confessed that the Muslims were becoming luxurious in foreign parts;—"The love of this present life," he said, "increaseth upon them, gold and silver dazzling their sight." Concerned at the unwelcome avowal, 'Omar summoned 'Otba, who came, leaving a Bedawi chief in charge at Al-Baṣra. The arrangement was highly distasteful to 'Omar,—"What!" he cried, "hast thou put a man of the Desert over the Companions of the Prophet? That may never be!" So Al-Moghira was placed in charge; and 'Otba dying on his journey back from pilgrimage, Al-Moghira became Governor in his stead. Thus early do we see the spirit of antagonism rapidly breeding between the Bedawi chiefs and the men of Mecca and Medina.

Campaign in Khūzistān, 17 A.H. 638 A.D.

Moghīra succeeds 'Otba at Baṣra.

A.H. 16-20.

Hostility of Al-Hormuzān, 18 A.H. 639 A.D.

In the following year a dispute as to their boundary arose between the Bedawi tribe and Al-Hormuzan; and the latter, dissatisfied with the Muslim general's decision, again raised his hostile standard. He was put to flight by the Muslims, who reduced the rebellious province, and sought permission to follow up the victory by a farther advance. But 'Omar, withholding permission, bade them rather busy themselves where they were in restoring the irrigation works, and so resuscitate the deserted fields of Khuzistan. Al-Hormuzan fled farther east, and was, for the second time, granted an amnesty.

Rām Hormuz and Tostar captured, 19 A.H. 640 A.D.

Not long after, emissaries from Yezdejird at Merv were found at work stirring the people up to fresh rebellion. The attitude of Al-Hormuzan became once more doubtful; and the Caliph, suspecting serious opposition, ordered a powerful army to assemble from Al-Kufa and Al-Basra, of which he gave command to An-No'man. Al-Hormuzan, with a great Persian following, was pursued by it; again routed at Rām Hormuz, he fled to Tostar, fifty miles north of Al-Ahwaz, a stronghold which, obstinately defended by the Persians, kept the Muslims for several months at bay. In the end, but not without considerable loss, it was stormed, and Al-Hormuzan, with the garrison, surrendered at the discretion of the Caliph, and was accordingly sent to the Court at Medīna.

Sūs, or Shushan.

Siege was then laid to Sus, the royal Shushan of ancient memory; still a formidable city, it was planted between two rivers, on a verdant plain with snow-clad mountains in the distance. The army succeeded here in drawing over a body of Persian nobles with a large native following; these were at once admitted to confidence, and commands conferred upon them, with the singular honour of a well-portioned place upon the tribal list. Still, it was not till after a protracted siege and conflict that Sus was taken. 'Omar gave orders for the reverential maintenance of the tomb of Daniel in this the scene of his memorable vision "by the river of Ulai"; and here, to the present day, the pious care of succeeding generations has preserved his shrine through thirteen centuries of succeeding change.

Tomb of Daniel.

Jundai-Sabūr.

The important city of Jundai-Sabūr, with surrounding country, was also reduced by An-No'man, and an advance

threatened on Ispahan. But events were now transpiring in Khorāsān, which at length opened the way to an advance upon the heart of Persia, and called that leader to more stirring work. A.H. 16-20.

The deputation which, along with the spoil of Tostar, carried Al-Hormuzān a prisoner to Medina, throws light upon the reasons that weighed with the Caliph to withdraw his long-standing embargo on a forward movement. As the party drew near Medina, they dressed out the captive in his brocaded vestments, to show to the Citizens the fashion of a Persian noble. Wearied with the reception of a deputation from Al-Kūfa (for in this way he transacted much of the provincial business), 'Omar had fallen asleep, whip in hand, on his cushioned carpet in the great Mosque. When the captive Prince entered the precincts of the court, "Where is the Caliph?" he cried, looking round, "and where his guards and warders?" It was indeed a contrast between the sumptuous palaces of the Chosroes, to which he had been used, and the simple surroundings of the mightier Caliph! Disturbed by the noise, 'Omar started up, and, divining who the stranger was, exclaimed, "Blessed be the Lord, who hath humbled this man and the like of him!" He made them disrobe the prisoner and clothe him in coarse raiment. Then, still whip in hand, he upbraided Al-Hormuzan, and (Al-Moghira interpreting) bade him justify the repeated breach of his engagements. The captive made as if fain to reply; then gasping, like one faint from thirst, begged for a draught of water. "Give it," said the Caliph, "and let him drink in peace." "Nay," said the captive, trembling, "I fear to drink, lest someone slay me unawares." "Thy life is safe," said 'Omar, "until thou hast drunk the water up." The words were no sooner spoken than Al-Hormuzan poured the contents upon the ground. "I wanted not the water," he said, "but quarter, and now thou hast given it me." "Liar!" cried 'Omar angrily, "thy life is forfeit." "But not," interposed the bystanders, "until he drink the water up." "Strange," said 'Omar, foiled for once, "the fellow hath deceived me, and yet I cannot spare the life of one who hath slain so many of the faithful by reiterated treachery. I swear that thou shalt not gain by thy deceit, unless thou embrace Islam." Al-Hormuzan, nothing loth, made pro- Al-Hormuzān spared by 'Omar.

A.H. 16-20.

fession of the faith upon the spot; and thenceforth, taking up his residence at Medina, received a pension of high grade.

Deputation urge removal of ban against advance.

"What is the cause," inquired 'Omar of the deputation, "that these Persians persistently break faith and rebel against us? Maybe, ye treat them harshly." "Not so," they answered; "but thou hast forbidden us to enlarge our boundary; and the King is in their midst to stir them up. Two Kings can in no wise exist together, until the one expel the other. It is not our harshness, but their King, that hath incited them to rise against us after having made submission. And so it will go on until thou shalt remove the barrier and leave us to go forward and expel their King. Not till then will their hopes and machinations cease."

'Omar begins to see this.

These views were also enforced by Al-Hormuzán. The truth began to dawn on 'Omar that necessity was laid upon him to withdraw the ban against advance. In self-defence, nothing was left but to crush the Chosroes and take entire possession of his realm.

CHAPTER XXIV

CONQUEST OF PERSIA

21-22 A.H. 642-643 A.D.

Persian campaign forced on 'Omar.

It was not long before any lingering doubts of 'Omar were put an end to. He was compelled at last by the warlike attitude of the Persian court to bid his armies take the field with the avowed object of dealing the Empire a final blow.

Yezdejird gathers a great army, 20 A.H. 641 A.D.

Though forced to fly, Yezdejird may have buoyed himself up with the hope that the Arabs, content with the fertile plain of Mesopotamia, would leave his possessions undisturbed beyond the mountain range. But the capture of Sūs, the ancient capital of Media, and the advance on Ispahān put an end to any such imagination. Arabian hordes still pressed upon the border; and their irruption into farther Persia was inevitable. The King, having resolved once more to stem the hostile tide, ordered the Governors of provinces to gather their forces together for a vigorous attack. Many of these enjoyed a virtually independent rule; but now their interests were knit together by a common danger. From the shores of the Caspian to the Indian Ocean, from the Oxus to the Persian Gulf, they rallied in vast numbers around the Royal standard on the plain below the snow-capped peak of Demāvend, on the south of the Caspian Sea.

Force under No'mān opposes them.

Tidings of the rising storm as they reached Sa'd were passed on directly to the Caliph. Each courier brought a fresh alarm. A host of 150,000 was assembled under a general named Firuzān; now encamped at Hamadān, now marching on Holwān, they would soon be close to Al-Kūfa, at their very doors. The crisis, no doubt, was serious. Any reverse on the mountain border would loosen hold upon the

A.H. 21-22. plains below; and Chaldæa, even Al-Kûfa and Al-Basra, might be wrested from them. As on previous occasions of imminent danger, 'Omar declared his resolve to march in person. Encamped midway between these two Cities, his presence would restore confidence; and while able from thence to direct the movements in front, his reserve would be a defence to them in the rear. But the old arguments again prevailed, and 'Omar was persuaded to remain behind. An-No'man was summoned from the campaign in Khûzistân to take the chief command. Leaving strong garrisons behind, troops were pushed forward in two columns from Al-Basra and Al-Kufa. The army at Sus, besides furnishing a contingent for the main advance, renewed its attack upon Istakhr (Persepolis), and so prevented the forces in that quarter from joining the royal standard.

Battle of Nihâvend, 21 A.H. 642 A.D.

Arrived at Holwan, An-No'man sent forward spies, who reported the enemy pitched in great force on the plain bounded by the lofty peaks of Elvand, or Arvand, to the south-west of Hamadan, but the road thus far clear. So they marched forward, and were soon face to face with the Persians on the memorable field of Nihavend. The Muslims were 30,000 strong, one-fifth only of the enemy; weak in numbers, but strong in faith, and nerved by the presence of veterans and heroes of former fields. After two days' skirmishing, the Persians retired behind their line of fortification, from whence they were able at pleasure to issue and molest their adversaries. The Muslims at last, wearied by delay, resolved by artifice to draw them out. At Toleiha's instance they fell back, and on the Persians following, wheeled round and cut them off from their return. A fierce engagement followed, and in it An-No'man was slain. But the Arabs achieved at last their wonted success. Of the enemy 30,000 were left on the field; the rest fled to an adjoining hill, and there 80,000 more were slain. Of the great army but shreds effected their escape. The fate of Firuzân gave rise to a pious proverb. He fled towards Hamadan, but finding the mountain pass choked by a caravan of honey, and losing his way, was overtaken thus and slain. Hence the saying—"*Part of the Lord's host is the honey-bee.*" Hamadan fell into the hands of the victorious army; and the royal treasure and jewels, deposited for safety

in the great fire-temple there, were delivered up. The chiefs and people of all western Persia submitted and became tributary. The booty was immense; and amongst it two caskets of rare gems, which 'Omar at first placed in the treasury at Medīna. Next morning, the courier was recalled, 'Omar having seen a vision of angels who warned him of punishment hereafter if he kept the jewels. "Take them hence," he said; "sell them, and let the price be divided amongst the army." They fetched 4,000,000 dirhems. A.H. 21-22. Decisive effect of Muslim victory.

'Omar had now embarked on an enterprise from which there was no returning. The proud Yezdejird refused to yield, and the Caliph no longer scrupled pursuing him to the bitter end. The warlike races south of the Caspian again gathered under Isfandiyār, brother of the ill-fated Rustem, for the defence of Ar-Reiy. The Muslims advanced to meet them; and another great victory placed the City at their mercy. Isfandiyār retired to Azerbījān; again defeated, he was taken prisoner; then, despairing of success, he changed sides, and made common cause with the invading army. From Ar-Reiy, Yezdejird fled to Ispahān; finding no shelter there, he hurried to Kirmān, and thence retired to Balkh. At last he took refuge in Merv, whence he sought aid from the Turks, and even from the Emperor of China. The former espoused his cause; and for several years the contest was waged with varying success in the vicinity of Merv. But in the end the Turkish hordes retired, and with them Yezdejird, across the Oxus. The conflict was subsequently renewed, but Yezdejird never recovered his authority; bereft of his treasures and deserted by his followers, who in vain besought him to tender submission, he survived till the reign of 'Othman, when, as we shall see, he met with an ignoble death. Reiy and other conquests, 22 A.H. 643 A.D.

On the fall of Ar-Reiy, the Arabs turned their arms against the various Persian provinces. Some of these, though subordinate in name, had been, in point of fact, their own masters; and now, even when the heart had ceased to beat, maintained a dangerous vitality. Six columns, drawn from Al-Kufa and Al-Basra, and continually replenished by new Arabian levies thirsting for rapine and renown, invaded as many different regions, each falling under the government Persian empire reduced.

A.H. 21-22. of the leader who reduced it. Thus, one after another, Fars, Kirman, Makran, Sijistan, Khorasan, and Azerbaijan, were overrun. But the people would ever and anon rise again in rebellion; and it was long before the invaders could subside into a settled life, or feel secure away from the protection of garrisoned entrenchments. The privileges enjoyed by professors of the faith were so great that the adherents of Zoroastrian worship were not long able to resist the attraction; by degrees the Persian race came over, in name at least, to the dominant creed, and in the end all opposition ceased. The notices of Zoroastrian families, and of fire-temples destroyed in after reigns, show indeed that in many quarters the conversion was slow and partial.[1]

Persians long held a subordinate race.

But after the fall of the Court, the political and social inducements to bow before Islam were, for the most part, irresistible. The polished Persian formed a new element in Muslim society. Yet, however noble and refined, he held for long a place apart and altogether inferior to that enjoyed by the rude but dominant class of Arabian blood. Individuals or families belonging to the subject peoples could only gain a recognised position by attaching themselves to some Arab chief or clan, as *mawali* (plural of *mawla*), "clients" or adherents; and, though thus dependent, might claim some of the privileges of the ruling faith. But neither here nor elsewhere did they intermarry with the Arabs on equal terms, nor were they, in point of fact, looked upon otherwise than as of inferior caste. Thus though in theory, on becoming Muslims, conquered nations might enter the "equal brotherhood" of Islam, they formed not the less an altogether lower estate. The race and language, ancestral dignity, and political privileges of the Arab line continued for many generations to be paramount.

[1] Zoroastrianism continued to be professed in Persia long after the Arab Conquest, in fact almost down to the present day. The laws passed against it were not enforced. Little over a century ago it had many adherents: but to-day there are said to be only some score of fire-temples in the country. The social and political inducements to profess Islam—a profession at first but superficial—are well brought out in *The Apology of Al-Kindi*. See especially the speech of Al-Ma'mun, pp. 29 and 84. Many, however, emigrated to India and founded the Parsee communities of that country.

CHAPTER XXV

THE LATER YEARS OF 'OMAR'S REIGN. DOMESTIC EVENTS

17-23 A.H. 638-644 A.D.

17-23 A.H. 638-44 A.D. Quiet in Syria, Arabia, and Egypt.

WHILE Muslim arms were thus rapidly reducing the East under their sway, the wave of conquest which had swept over Syria, and broken threateningly on the southern border of Asia Minor, now for the time relaxed into a calm. After the death of Heraclius there was no longer spirit left in the Empire to continue the struggle by either land or sea. Desultory attempts there were at intervals upon the coast, but followed by no lasting success. Mu'āwiya was busy meanwhile consolidating the administration of Syria, and, with sagacious foresight, strengthening his hold against the chances of the future. Elsewhere peace prevailed. 'Amr maintained firm rule in Egypt; and, waging chronic warfare against the Native tribes and Roman settlements on the coast, gradually extended westward the boundaries of Islam. Arabia, still pouring forth its restless spirits to fight abroad, was tranquil at home.

'Omar visits Mecca; enlarges court of Ka'ba.

Besides the journeys in Syria already mentioned, 'Omar quitted his residence at Medina only for the annual Pilgrimage. The governors of the various provinces used to visit Mecca for the same purpose; and the Caliph was wont to improve the opportunity for conferring with them as they returned by way of Medina, on matters of provincial interest. Several years before his death, he spent three weeks at Mecca, and enlarged the space around the Ka'ba. Dwellings that approached too closely to the Holy House were pulled down, and the first step taken to form a grand Square and piazza such as became the place of worship for all mankind. Some owners refused to sell their patrimony; but the houses were demolished nevertheless, and the price in compensation

A.H. 17-23.

deposited in the treasury. The boundary pillars of the *Haram*, or sacred precincts around the City, were renewed; and convenient halting-places constructed at the pilgrim stations, for custody of which and care of the adjoining springs, the local tribes were held responsible.

Disaster in Red Sea, 19 A.H. 640 A.D.

In the seventh year of 'Omar's reign volcanic fires burst from a hill in the neighbourhood of Medina. The Caliph gave command to distribute alms amongst the poor, a pious work in which the people joined; "and so the volcano stopped." In the same year a naval expedition was sent across the Red Sea, to check attacks upon the Muslims on the Abyssinian coast. The vessels were wrecked, and the expedition suffered great privation. The disaster led 'Omar to vow that he would never again permit troops to embark upon an element so treacherous. It was not till some years after his death that the Muslims gathered courage to brave the risks of a naval encounter.

Moghīra arraigned on charge of adultery, 17 A.H. 638 A.D.

In the governors appointed to control the turbulent vitirs of Al-Kūfa and Al-Baṣra, 'Omar was not altogether fortunate. 'Otba, governor of Al-Baṣra, died, as we have seen shortly after rescuing the unfortunate expedition to Persepolis. The choice of a successor in Al-Moghira was ill-advised. Of rude and repulsive aspect, he had committed murder in his youth at At-Ṭaif, and Islam had not softened his nature or improved his morals. A *harim* of fourscore wives and concubines failed to satisfy his vagrant passion. At Al-Baṣra his movements were watched by enemies, who through an intervening window were witness to an intrigue with a Bedawi lady visiting his house. When he came forth to lead the public prayer, they shouted him down as an adulterer; and 'Omar summoned him to answer the accusation. By any reasonable law of evidence, the crime had been established beyond a doubt; but, under the strange conditions promulgated by Mohammad on the misadventure of his favourite wife, there was a flaw in the testimony of Ziyad, the fourth witness.[1] The Caliph, with an ill-concealed groan at the

[1] The autoptic witness of four persons is necessary for conviction, the penalty being death; but if the evidence fail of full proof, the witnesses instead are scourged (*Life of Mohammad*, p. 302 f.). Conviction therefore is, under ordinary circumstances, practically impossible. Al-Moghira felt beholden to Ziyad for his evidence in this matter, as we shall in the sequel see.

miscarriage of justice, ordered the witnesses to be scourged according to the ordinance, and the accused set free. "Strike hard," cried the barefaced Al-Moghira, addressing the unwilling minister of the law; — "strike hard, and comfort my heart thereby!" "Hold thy peace," said 'Omar; "it wanted but little to convict thee; and then thou shouldst have been stoned to death as an adulterer." The culprit was silenced, but not abashed. He continued to reside in Medina, a crafty courtier at the Caliph's gate. A.H. 17-23.

As successor, 'Omar appointed Abu Mūsa to the government of Al-Baṣra, a man of very different stamp. Small of stature, smooth in face, and of little presence, he had yet distinguished himself at Honein, and had been employed as an envoy by the Prophet. He wanted strength and firmness for the stormy times that were coming, but was wise and sufficiently able to hold the restless Bedawīn of Al-Baṣra in check. Belonging to a Bedawi tribe himself, it was perhaps an advantage, in the jealousies now growing up, to be outside the clique of Mecca and Medina citizens. But feeling still the need of such support, he said to 'Omar as he was leaving: "Thou must strengthen my hands with a company of the Companions of the Prophet, for verily they are as salt in the midst of the people"; and his request was granted, for he took nine-and-twenty men of mark along with him. But even Abu Musa was near losing his command, and that in a way which curiously illustrates 'Omar's government. After a successful campaign against the Kurds, he sent, as usual, a deputation to Medina with report of the victory, and the royal fifth. Dabba, a discontented citizen, being refused a place upon it, set out alone to Medina, and there laid charges against Abu Musa, who was summoned by 'Omar to clear himself. After some days of confinement, he was brought before the Caliph, face to face with his accuser. The first charge was that a band of youths taken in the expedition were used by him as attendants. "True," said Abu Musa; "they did me good service as guides; therefore I paid their ransom, and now, being free, they serve me." "He speaketh the truth," answered Dabba, "but what I said was also true." The second was that he held two landed properties. "I do," explained Abu Musa; "one for the subsistence of my family, the other for the sustenance of the people." Dabba answered

Abu Mūsa governor of Baṣra.

Accused of malversation, 23 A.H. 644 A.D.

A.H. 17-23.

as before. The third was that the governor had in his household a girl that fared too sumptuously. Abu Musa was silent. Again, he was charged with making over the seals of office to Ziyad; which was admitted by Abu Musa, "because he found the youth to be wise and fit for office." The last charge was that he had given the largess of a thousand dirhems to a poet; and this Abu Musa admitted,—to preserve, as he said, his authority from scurrilous attack. The Caliph was satisfied, and permitted Abu Musa to resume his government, but desired him to send Ziyad and the girl to Medina. On their arrival, 'Omar was so pleased with Ziyad, already foreshadowing his administrative talent, that he sent him back with approval of his employment in the affairs of state; but the girl was detained, perhaps because of her undue influence, in confinement at Medina. With Dabba the Caliph was very angry. Out of malice he had sought to ruin Abu Musa by one-sided allegations. "Truth perverted is no better," said 'Omar, "than a lie; and a lie leadeth to hell-fire."

Sa'd governor of Kūfa deposed, 21 A.H. 642 A.D.

Al-Kūfa remained several years under its founder Sa'd, the conqueror of Chaldæa. At length, in the ninth year of 'Omar's reign, a faction sprang up against him. The Bedawi jealousy of Koreish had already begun to work; and Sa'd was accused of unfairness in distributing the booty. There was imputed also lack of martial spirit and backwardness in the field, a revival of the slanderous charge at Al-Kādisiya. He was summoned, with his accusers, to Medina; but the main offence proved against him was one of little concern to them. In his public ministrations he had cut short the customary prayers; and 'Omar, deeming the misdemeanour to be unpardonable, deposed him. To fill a vacancy requiring unusual skill, experience, and power 'Omar unwisely appointed 'Ammār, who, as a persecuted slave and confessor in the first days of Islām, was second to none in the faith; but a man of no ability, and now advanced in years.[1] The citizens of Al-Kūfa were not long in finding out his incapacity; and, at their desire, 'Omar transferred Abu Musa from Al-Baṣra to rule over them. But it was no easy work for him to curb the factious populace. They took offence at his slave for undue influence in buying fodder

[1] *Life of Moḥammad*, p. 67 f.

before it crossed the bridge; and for so slight a cause, after he had been Governor but for a year, the Caliph sent him back again to Al-Baṣra. 'Omar was on the point of making another nomination, when the artful Al-Moghīra wormed the secret from him; and, dwelling on the burden of a hundred thousand turbulent citizens, suggested that the candidate in view was not fit to bear it. "But," said 'Omar, "the men of Al-Kufa have pressed me to send them neither a headstrong tyrant, nor a weak and impotent believer." "As for a weak believer," answered Al-Moghīra, "his faith is for himself, his weakness thine; as for a strong tyrant, his tyranny injureth himself, his strength is for thee." 'Omar, caught in the snare, was weak enough to confer on Al-Moghīra, his former scandal notwithstanding, the government of Al-Kufa. With all his defects, Al-Moghīra was, without doubt, the strong man needed for that stiff-necked city; and he held his position during the two remaining years of 'Omar's reign.

A.H. 17-23.

Moghīra appointed in his room.

About the same time, 'Omar appointed another early convert of singular religious merit, 'Abdallah ibn Mas'ūd, who had in early days, like 'Ammār, been a slave at Mecca, to a post at Al-Kufa, for which, however, he was better fitted, —the charge of the treasury. He had been the body-servant of the Prophet, who was used to call him "light in body, but weighty in faith."[1] He was learned in the Ḳor'ān, and had a "reading" of his own, to which as the best text, he held persistently against all recensions.

'Abdallah ibn Mas'ūd.

There was still considerable jealousy between Al-Baṣra and its richer rival. The armies of both had contributed towards the conquest of Khuzistan, and had shared accordingly. But Al-Baṣra, with its teeming thousands, was comparatively poor; and 'Omar, to equalise the benefits of all who had served in the earlier campaigns, assigned to them increased allowances, to be met from the surplus revenues of the territories administered at Al-Kufa.

Baṣra additional endowment.

In the more important governments, the judicial office was discharged by a functionary who held his commission as Ḳādi immediately from the Caliph. The control of other departments remained with the Governor, who, in virtue of his office, led the daily Prayers and, especially on Friday,

Provincial officers, civil, military, and religious.

[1] *Life of Mohammad*, pp. 59, 201.

A.H. 17-23.

added an address which had often an important political bearing. Military and fiscal functions, vested at the first, like other powers, in the Governor's hands, came eventually to be discharged by officers specially appointed to the duty. Teachers of religion were commissioned by the State. From the rapidity with which whole peoples were brought within the scope of Islám, risk arose of error in respect both of creed and ritual, to the vast multitude of "Neo-muslims," as they were called. To obviate the danger 'Omar appointed masters in every country, whose business it should be to instruct the people—men and women separately—in the Kor'an and its requirements. Early also in his reign, he imposed it, as a legal obligation, that the people, both small and great, should all attend the public services, especially on Friday; and notably that in the month of Fast, the whole body of Muslims should be constant in the assembling of themselves together in the Mosques.

Era of the Hijra, 17 A.H.

To 'Omar is popularly ascribed, not only the establishment of the Diwan or Exchequer, and offices of systematic account, but also the regulation of the Arabian year. He introduced for this purpose the Mohammadan Era, commencing with the new moon of the first month (Moharram) of the year in which the Prophet fled from Mecca. Hence the Mohammadan year was named the *Hijra*, sometimes written *Hegira*, or "Era of the Flight."[1]

Deterioration of social and domestic life.

Of the state of Mohammadan society at this period we have not the material for judging closely. Constant employment in the field, no doubt, tended to check the depraving influences which, in times of ease and luxury, relaxed the sanctions and tainted the purity of Bedawi life. But there is ample indication that the relations between the sexes were already deteriorating. The baneful influence of polygamy, divorce, and servile concubinage, was quickened by the multitude of captive women distributed or sold among the soldiers and the community at large. The

[1] The calendar was already strictly lunar, as announced by the Prophet at the farewell pilgrimage. But the *era*, and consequent numbering of the years, was introduced only now. The lunar year is eleven days shorter than the solar, and so loses three years in every century of ours. There is this convenience in the lunar reckoning, that, if the date be given, you can tell the age of the moon; but also this serious want, that the month is no indication of the season of the year.

wife of noble blood held, under the old and chivalrous code of the Bedawin, a position of honour and supremacy in the household, from which she could be ousted by no base-born rival, however fair or fruitful. She was now to be, in the estimation of her husband, but one amongst many. A slave-girl bearing children, became at once, as *Um Wéled*,[1] free; and in point of legitimacy her offspring ranked with the children of the free and noble wife. Beauty and blandishment thus too often outshone birth and breeding, and the favourite of the hour displaced her noble mistress. A.H. 17-23.

With the coarse sensualist, revelling like Al-Moghīra in a *ḥarīm* stocked with Greek and Persian bond-maids, this might have been expected. But it was not less the case in many a house of greater refinement and repute. Some lady, ravished, it may have been, from a noble home, and endowed with the charms and graces of a courtly life, would captivate her master, and for the moment rule supreme. The story of Leila affords a sample. That beautiful Ghassánid princess was bought at Dūma by Khalid from the common prize. The fame of her charms reached Medina, and kindled a romantic flame in the breast of 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, son of Abu Bekr. The disconsolate lover ceased not singing his mistress's praises, and his own unhappiness, in verses still preserved. At last he became her master, and she was despatched from the camp to his home. At once he took her to wife. His love was so great that, forsaking all other, he kept only to her, so long as her beauty lasted. She was the queen of his household. After a time she fell sick and began to waste away. The beauty went, and with it the master's love, and her turn came to be forsaken. His comrades said to him: "Why keep her forsaken and neglected thus? Suffer her to go back to her people and her home." So he suffered her. Leila's fate was happy compared with that of most. Tired of his toy, the owner would sell her, if still young and beautiful, to be the plaything of another; or if disease or years had fretted her beauty, leave her to eke out the forlorn, weary, hopeless, lot of a household slave. Story of Leila.

[1] *i.e.* "Mother of a child."

A.H. 17-23.

Use of wine.

Relaxation of manners is significantly marked by frequent notices of drunkenness. There are not wanting instances even of Governors deposed because of it. 'Omar was rigorous in imposing the legal penalty. He did not shrink from commanding stripes to be inflicted, even on his own son and his boon companions, for the use of wine. At Damascus, the scandal grew to such a height that Abu 'Obeida had to summon a band of citizens, with the hero Dirar at their head, for the offence. Hesitating to enforce the law, he begged of 'Omar that the penitent offenders might be forgiven. An angry answer came: "Gather an assembly," he wrote in the stern language of his early days, "and bring them forth. Then ask, *Is wine lawful or forbidden?* If they shall say *forbidden*, lay eighty stripes on each; if *lawful*, behead them every one." They confessed that it was forbidden, and submitted to the ignominious punishment.

Influence of concubinage on the family.

Weakness for wine may have been a relic of the days when the poet sang, "Bury me under the roots of the juicy vine." But there were domestic influences altogether new at work in the vast accession of captive women, Greek, Persian, and Egyptian, to the Muslim *harims*. The Jews and Christians might retain their ancestral faith, whether as concubines, or married to their masters. With their ancestral faith they, no doubt, retained much also of the habits of their fatherland; and the same may be said both of them and of the Heathen and Parsee slave-girls, even when adopting outwardly the Muslim faith. The countless progeny of these alliances, though ostensibly bred in the creed and practice of Islam, must have inherited much of the mother's life and nationality who nursed and brought them up. The crowded *harim*, with its sanction of servile concubinage, was also an evil school for the rising generation. Wealth, luxury, and idleness were under such circumstances provocative of licence and indulgence, which too often degenerated into intemperance and debauchery.

Prevailing laxity of manners.

For, apart from war and faction, Muslim life was idle and inactive. There was little else to relieve its sanctimonious voluptuousness. The hours not spent in the *harim* were divided between listless converse in the City

clubs, and prayer at Mosque five times a day. Ladies no longer appeared in public excepting as they flitted along shrouded beneath "the veil." The light and grace, the charm and delicacy, hitherto imparted by their presence to Arab society were gone; the softness, brightness, and warmth of nature, so beautifully portrayed in ancient Arab song, were chilled and overcast. Games of chance, and suchlike amusements, were forbidden; even speculation was checked by the ban on interest for money lent. And so, Muslim life, cut off, beyond the threshold of the *ḥarīm*, from the ameliorating influences of the gentler sex, began to assume outside the dreary, morose, and cheerless aspect ever since retained. But nature is not to be for ever thus pent up; the rebound too often comes; and in casting off its shackles, humanity not seldom bursts likewise through the barriers of the Faith. The gay youth of Islām, cloyed with the dull delights of the sequestered *ḥarīm*, were tempted thus when abroad to evade the restrictions of their creed, and seek in the cup, in music, games, and dissipation, the excitement which the young and light-hearted will demand. In the greater cities, intemperance and libertinism were rife. The canker spread, oftentimes the worse because concealed. The more serious classes were scandalised not only by amusements, luxuries, and voluptuous living, inconsistent with their creed, but even with immoralities which cannot here be named. Development of this evil came later on, but tares were already sown even under the strict regime of 'Omar.[1] A.H. 17-23.

Simplicity of 'Omar's domestic life.

For the present such excesses prevailed only in foreign parts. At home, the Caliphs, fortified by the hallowed associations of Medina, preserved the simplicity of ancient Arab life. Severe simplicity, indeed, was not incompatible (as in the case of Mohammad himself) with the indulgences of the *ḥarīm*. But even in this respect, the first three Caliphs, judged by the standard of Islam, were temperate and modest. 'Omar, they say, had no passion for the sex. Before the Hijra, he contracted marriage with four wives,

[1] For a description of the shameless demoralisation that prevailed in Damascus and Bagdad, I must refer to the learned and elaborate work of H. von Kremer, *Culturgeschichte des Orients unter dem Chalifen.*

A.H. 17-23. but two of these, preferring to remain at Mecca, separated from him. At Medina, he married five more, one of whom, however, he divorced. The last marriage was in the eighth year of his reign, when near sixty years of age. Three years previously he had married a granddaughter of the Prophet, under circumstances casting a curious light on his domestic ways. He conceived a liking for Um Kulthum, the maiden daughter of Abu Bekr, and sister of 'Aisha, through whom a betrothal was arranged. But 'Aisha found the light-hearted damsel with no desire to wed the aged Caliph. In this dilemma she had recourse to the astute 'Amr, who readily undertook to break the marriage off. He broached the subject to 'Omar, who thereupon imagined that 'Amr wished the maiden for himself. "Nay," said 'Amr, "that I do not; but she hath been bred softly in the family of her father Abu Bekr, and I fear she may ill brook thine austere manners, and the gravity of thy house." "But," replied 'Omar, "I have already engaged to marry her; how can I break it off?" "Leave that to me," said 'Amr; "thou hast indeed a duty to provide for Abu Bekr's family, but the heart of this maiden is not with thee. Let her alone, and I will show thee a better than she, another Um Kulthum, even the daughter of 'Ali and of Fatima." So 'Omar married this other maiden, and she bore him a son and a daughter.

Death of many familiar personages.

Many of those names we have been familiar with were now dropping off the scene;—Fatima, the daughter, and Safiya, the aunt of Mohammad, Zeinab one of his wives, and Mary his Coptic bond-maid; Abu 'Obeida, Khalid, and the Muezzin Bilal. Many others who also bore a conspicuous part in the great *rôle* of the Prophet's life had now passed away, and a new race was springing up in their place.

Abu Sufyān and Hind.

Abu Sufyan survived till 32 A.H., and died 88 years of age. One eye he lost at the siege of At-Taif, and the other at the battle on the Yarmuk, so that he had long been blind. He divorced Hind, the mother of Mu'awiya—she who "chewed the liver" of Hamza at the battle of Ohod![1] The reason for the divorce does not appear.

[1] *Life of Mohammad*, p. 263.

CHAPTER XXVI

DEATH OF 'OMAR

23 A.H. 644 A.D.

'Omar's last pilgrimage, 23 A.H. Oct. 644 A.D.

It was now the eleventh year of 'Omar's Caliphate, and though some sixty years of age, he was full of vigour, and vigilant in the discharge of the vast responsibilities devolving on him. In the last month of the year he journeyed, as was his wont, to Mecca; and taking the widows of Mohammad in his suite, performed with them the full rites of the annual Pilgrimage. He had returned but a few days to Medīna, when his reign came to a tragic and untimely end.

Abu Lu'lu'a, a slave, promises to make him a windmill.

A Persian slave, Abu Lu'lu'a, had been brought by Al-Moghira from Al-'Irak. Made prisoner in his youth by the Greeks, he had early embraced Christianity; and now, taken by the Muslims, his fate was to endure a second captivity as Al-Moghira's slave. When the crowd of prisoners was marched into Medina from the battle of Nihāvend, said to have been Abu Lu'lu'a's birthplace, the sight opened springs of tenderness long pent up; and, stroking the heads of the little ones, he exclaimed: "*Verily, 'Omar hath consumed my bowels!*" He followed the trade of carpenter; and his master shared the profits. Meeting 'Omar in the market-place, he cried out, "Commander of the Faithful! right me of my wrong, for verily Al-Moghira hath assessed me heavily." "At how much?" asked the Caliph. "At two dirhems a day." "And what is thy trade?" "A carpenter and worker in iron," he said. "It is not much," replied 'Omar, "for a clever artificer like thee. I am told that thou couldest design for me a mill driven by the wind." "It is true." "Come then," continued the Caliph, "and make me such a mill that shall be driven by the wind." "If spared,"

A H. 23. said the captive in surly voice, "I will make a mill for thee, the fame whereof shall reach from east even to far west"; and he went on his way. 'Omar remarked, as he passed, the sullen demeanour of Abu Lu'lu'a:—"That slave," he said, "spoke threateningly to me just now."[1]

'Omar mortally wounded by him.

Next day, when the people assembled in the Mosque for morning prayer, Abu Lu'lu'a mingled with the front rank of the worshippers. 'Omar entered, and, as customary, took his stand in front of the congregation, with his back towards them. No sooner had he begun the prayer with the words *Allâhu Akbar*, than Abu Lu'lu'a rushed upon him, and with a sharp blade inflicted six wounds in different parts of his body. Then he ran wildly about, killing some and wounding others, and at last stabbed himself to death. 'Omar, who had fallen to the ground, was borne into his house adjoining the court, but was sufficiently composed to desire that 'Abd ar-Rahman should proceed with the service. When it was ended, he summoned him to his bedside, and signified his intention of nominating him to the Caliphate. "Is it obligatory upon me?" inquired 'Abd ar-Rahman. "Nay, by the Lord!" said 'Omar, "thou art free." "That being so," he replied, "I never will accept the burden." "Then stanch my wound," said the dying Caliph (for life was ebbing through a gash below the navel), "and stay me while I commit my trust unto a company that were faithful unto their Prophet, and with whom their Prophet was well pleased." So he named, together with 'Abd ar-Rahman, other four,—'Ali, 'Othman, Az-Zubeir, and Sa'd,—as the chiefest among the Companions, to be Electors of his successor, and called them to his bedside. When they appeared, he proceeded:—"Wait for your brother Talha" (absent at the moment from Medina) "three days; if he arrive take him for the sixth; if not, ye are to decide the matter without him." Then, addressing each in turn, he warned them of the responsibility attaching to the duty now imposed upon them, and the danger to the one elected

Appoints Electors to choose successor.

[1] So Roderic, the last king of the Goths, asked his vassal Julian, governor of Ceuta, whom he had deeply wronged, to send him a special kind of falcon, and the latter replied that he would send him some better than he had ever sent—meaning the Arabs. Roderic, however, did not see the threat.

of partiality towards his own clan and family. "O 'Ali, if the choice fall upon thee, see that thou exalt not the house of Hāshim above their fellows. And thou, 'Othman, if thou art elected, or Sa'd, beware thou set not thy kinsmen over the necks of men. Arise, go forth, deliberate, and then decide. Meanwhile Soheib shall lead the prayers." When they had departed, he called Abu Ṭalha, a warrior of note, to him, saying:—"Go, stand before the door, and suffer no man to enter in upon them." After a pause he spoke solemnly to those around him:—"Tell it to him who shall succeed, as my last bequest, that he be kind to the Men of the City which gave to us and to the Faith a home; that he make much of their virtues, and pass lightly by their faults. Bid him treat well the Arab tribes; verily they are the backbone of Islam; the tithe that he taketh from them, let him give it back unto the same for nourishment of their poor. And the Jews and Christians, let him faithfully fulfil the covenant of the Prophet with them. O Lord, I have finished my course. And now to him that cometh after me I leave the kingdom firmly established and at peace." Then he lay down quietly and rested for a time. A.H. 23.

Desires to be interred by the Prophet.

After a while he bade his son 'Abdallah go forth and see who it was that wounded him. Told that it was Abu Lu'lu'a, he exclaimed:—"Praise be to the Lord that it was not one who had ever bowed down before Him, even once, in prayer! Now 'Abdallah, my son, go in unto 'Āisha and ask her leave that I be buried in her chamber by the side of the Prophet, and by the side of Abu Bekr. If she refuse, then bury me by the other Muslims, in the graveyard of Al-Bakī'.[1] And list thee, 'Abdallah, if the Electors disagree" (for he was to have a casting voice) "be thou with the majority; or, if the votes be equal, choose the side on which is 'Abd ar-Raḥman. Now let the people come in." Crowds had assembled at the door; and, permission given, they approached to make obeisance. As they passed in and out, 'Omar asked whether any leading man had joined with Abu Lu'lu'a in conspiracy against him. "The Lord forbid!" was the loud response, in horror at the very thought.

[1] For this burying-ground outside the city, see *Life of Moḥammad*, p. 199.

A.H. 23.

His death. 26 xii. 23 A.H. Nov. 644 A.D.

Among the rest, 'Ali came to inquire; and as he sat by the Caliph's bedside, the son of Al-'Abbas too came up. 'Omar, who dreaded the factious spirit of the latter, said: "O Ibn al-'Abbas, art thou with me in this matter?" He signified assent, whereupon 'Omar added earnestly: "See that thou deceive me not, thou and thy fellows. Now, 'Abdallah, my son, raise my head from the pillow, then lay it gently down upon the ground; peradventure the Lord may in mercy take me thus, this night, for I fear the horrors of the rising sun." A physician gave him to drink of date-water; but it oozed through the wound unchanged; and so also with a draught of milk. Which when the physician saw he said: "I perceive that the wound is mortal: make now thy testament, O Commander of the Faithful." "That," said 'Omar, "have I done already." As he lay, his head resting on the bosom of his son, he recited this couplet:—

"It would have gone hard with my soul, had I not been a Muslim;
And fasted and prayed as the Lord hath commanded."

Achievements of his Caliphate.

And so, in a low voice, he kept repeating the name of the Lord and the Muslim creed, until his spirit passed away. It was a few days before the close of the 23rd year of the Hijra. He had reigned for the space of ten years and a half.

Vigorous, wise, and simple.

So died 'Omar, next to the Prophet the greatest in the kingdom of Islam; for it was all within these ten years that, by his wisdom, patience, and vigour, the dominion was achieved of Syria, Egypt, and Persia. Abu Bekr beat down the Apostate tribes; but at his death the armies of Islam had but just crossed the Syrian frontier. 'Omar began his reign master only of Arabia. He died the Caliph of an Empire embracing some of the fairest provinces under Byzantine rule, and with Persia to boot. Yet throughout this marvellous fortune he never lost the balance of a wise and sober judgment, nor exalted himself above the frugal habit of an Arab chief. "Where is the Caliph?" the visitor would ask, as he looked around the court of the Medina mosque; and all the while the monarch might be sitting in homely guise before him.

Character.

'Omar's life requires but few lines to sketch. Simplicity and duty were his guiding principles, impartiality and

devotion the leading features of his administration. Responsibility so weighed upon him that he was heard to exclaim, "O that my mother had not borne me; would that I had been this stalk of grass instead!" In early life of a fiery and impatient temper, he was known, even in the later days of the Prophet, as the stern advocate of vengeance. Ever ready to unsheathe the sword, it was he that at Bedr advised that the prisoners should all be put to death. But age, as well as office, had now mellowed this asperity. His sense of justice was strong. And except it be the treatment of Khalid, whom according to some accounts, he pursued with an ungenerous resentment, no act of tyranny or injustice is recorded against him; and even in this matter, his enmity took its rise in Khālid's unscrupulous treatment of a fallen foe. The choice of his captains and governors was free from favouritism, and (Al-Moghira and 'Ammār excepted) singularly fortunate. The various tribes and bodies in the empire, representing interests the most diverse, reposed in his integrity implicit confidence, and his strong arm maintained the discipline of law and empire. A certain weakness is discernible in his change of governors at the factious seats of Al-Baṣra and Al-Kūfa. Yet even there, the conflicting jealousies of Bedawin and Ḳoreish were kept by him in check, and never dared disturb Islām till he had passed away. The more distinguished of the Companions he kept by him at Medina, partly, no doubt, to strengthen his counsels, and partly (as he would say) from unwillingness to lower their dignity by placing them in office subordinate to himself. Whip in hand, he would perambulate the streets and markets of Medina, ready to punish offenders on the spot; and so the proverb,—"'Omar's whip is more terrible than another's sword." But with all this he was tender-hearted, and numberless acts of kindness are recorded of him, such as relieving the wants of the widow and the fatherless.[1] A.H. 23.

[1] For example, journeying in Arabia during the famine, he came upon a poor woman and her hungry weeping children seated round a fire, whereon was an empty pot. 'Omar hastened on to the next village, procured bread and meat, filled the pot, cooked an ample meal, and left the little ones laughing and at play. Similar instances of 'Omar's conscientious discharge of his duty are given in Ṭab. i 2752 ff.

A.H. 23.

First "Commander of the Faithful."

'Omar was the first who assumed the title Amir al-Mu'minin, or "Commander of the Faithful." "*Khalifa* (Caliph, Successor) *of the Khalifa* (Abu Bekr) *of the Prophet of the Lord* was too long and cumbersome a name," he said, "while the other was easier, and fitter for common use."

Burial.

According to his desire, 'Omar was buried side by side with the Prophet and Abu Bekr, in the chamber of 'Aisha. Soheib, as presiding over the public Prayers, performed the funeral service, and the five Electors, with the Caliph's son, lowered the body into its last resting-place.

Stormy prospect.

The Muslim annalist may well sigh as, bidding farewell to the strong and single-minded Caliph, he enters on the weak, selfish, and stormy reign of his successor.

CHAPTER XXVII

ELECTION OF 'OTHMĀN

Dhu'l-Ḥijja, 23 A.H.—*Moḥarram*, 24 A.H.—*November*, 644 A.D.

The Electors. xii. 23 A.H. Nov. 644 A.D.

WHAT arrangements 'Omar might have made for a successor, had his end come less suddenly upon him, it is perhaps unnecessary to inquire. But some more definite choice he would, in all probability, have formed. We know that the perils of disunion hung heavily on his mind. The unbridled arrogance of the Arabian tribes at Al-Kufa and Al-Baṣra, flushed with the glory and spoils of war, was already felt to be a growing danger; while family rivalries among Koreish themselves had begun to weaken their hold upon the people. So much is plain, that ('Abd ar-Raḥmān excepted) 'Omar saw no one amongst them endowed with sufficient power and influence to hold the reins of government; none, at least, so prominent as to take the acknowledged lead. Again, the mode of nomination or election proper to Islām was yet uncertain. Abu Bekr on his death-bed appointed 'Omar his successor; but the higher precedent of Mohammad himself, who when laid aside simply named Abu Bekr to lead the prayers, was of doubtful meaning. Had Abu 'Obeida survived, 'Omar was known to say that he would have chosen him; but he was gone, and 'Abd ar-Raḥman would none of the post. Weak and faint from the assassin's dagger, the emergency came upon the dying Caliph unprepared. So, relieving himself of the responsibility, he fell upon the expedient of nominating the chiefest of the Companions, on one or other of whom he knew the choice must fall, to be Electors.

Their position and character.

'Omar hoped, no doubt, that the successor thus chosen would have the unequivocal support of those who elected

A.H. 23. him. But he had not calculated on the frailty of human nature; and selfish ends proved more powerful than loyalty. 'Abd ar-Rahmān was the only real patriot amongst them. Neither Talha, nor Az-Zubeir, nor Sa'd had any special reason to aspire to the Caliphate. Az-Zubeir, indeed, was closely related to the Prophet. Sa'd, also, was the nephew of Mohammad's mother; but his recall from Al-Kufa had tarnished his fame as conqueror of Al-Medain. 'Alī, a few years younger, had the strongest claim of kinship, whatever that might be; for he was at once the son of the Prophet's uncle, the widowed husband of the Prophet's daughter Fatima, and the father of his only surviving grandsons. He had hitherto, from inactive temperament, remained passive at the Caliph's court; but, of quick and high intelligence, he had ever held a distinguished place in the counsels of 'Omar. In the absence of any leading competitor, his claim could now no longer be left out of sight, nor, without want of spirit, fail to be asserted by himself. 'Othmān was his only real rival. Years carried weight with 'Othmān, for he was now close on seventy. Attractive in person and carriage, he early gained the hand of Rokeiya, the Prophet's daughter. Shortly after her death, he married her sister Um Kulthum; and when she, too, passed away, Mohammad used to say he loved 'Othmān so dearly that, if another daughter had yet remained, he would have given her to him. But his character withal had vital defects. Of a close and selfish disposition, his will was soft and yielding. And of all the competitors, 'Othmān probably had the least capacity for dominating the unruly elements now fermenting throughout the Muslim empire.

The conclave. The Electors, when appointed by 'Omar, forthwith retired, and fell into loud and hot discussion. 'Omar, overhearing it, desired that they should wait till his decease. So after the burial, Al-Mikdād, a veteran citizen appointed by the deceased Caliph to the duty, assembled the Electors in the treasury chamber adjoining 'Āisha's house, while Abu Talha with a guard kept watch at the door. 'Omar had ordered that the choice should not be delayed beyond the third day, so that his successor might be declared by the fourth at latest; and signified the utmost urgency by saying that if the minority then resisted, they should be beheaded

on the spot. The Electors, when thus again assembled, pressed hotly each the claim of his own party, and two days passed in unprofitable wrangling. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān spent the night in visiting the leading Citizens, and the chief officers from the Provinces (who, having come for the yearly Pilgrimage, had not yet departed), and in sounding their views. On the third day, Abu Ṭalḥa warned the Electors that he would allow no further delay, and that decision must be come to by the morning. To bring the matter to an issue, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān offered to forego his own claim, if only the rest would abide by his choice. They all agreed but 'Ali, who at first was silent, but at last said: "First give me thy word that thou wilt regard neither kith nor kin, but right alone and the people's weal." "And I," rejoined 'Abd ar-Raḥman, "ask thee first to give me thy troth that thou wilt abide by my choice, and against all dissentients support it." 'Ali assented, and thus the matter rested in the hands of 'Abd ar-Raḥmān. A.H. 23.

That night 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, closeted with each of the Electors in turn, did not close his eyes. The contest was narrowed between the houses of Hāshim and Umeiya, in the persons of 'Ali and 'Othmān; and their influence with the electoral body was fairly equal. Az-Zubeir was in favour of 'Ali; how Sa'd voted is not certain. Ṭalḥa had not yet returned. With 'Ali and 'Othman, separately, 'Abd ar-Raḥman was long in secret conference. Each pressed his own claim; but each admitted the claim of the other to be the next in weight. The morning broke upon them thus engaged; and now the nomination must be made. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān umpire.

The courts of the Mosque overflowed with expectant worshippers assembled for the morning service. 'Abd ar-Raḥman addressed them thus:—"The people think that the governors, chiefs, and captains from abroad should, without further waiting, return to their respective posts. Wherefore advise me now in this matter." 'Ammar, late governor of Al-Kūfa, said: "If it be thy desire that there be no division in the land, then salute 'Ali Caliph!" and Al-Miḳdad affirmed the same. "Nay," cried Ibn abi Sarḥ, "if it be thy desire that there be no division, then salute 'Othmān!" and Abu Rabi'a affirmed the same. 'Ammār turned in contempt on Ibn abi Sarḥ, who, repaying scorn

A.H. 24.

'Othmān elected.

with scorn, said: "And pray, 'Ammār, how long hast thou been counsellor to the Mu-lims? Let the Beni Hāshim and the Beni Umeiya speak for themselves." But 'Ammār would not be silent; whereupon one cried angrily, "Thou passest beyond thy bounds, O son of Sumeiya; who art thou, thus to counsel Koreish?"[1] Sa'd, seeing the strife wax warm, said to 'Abd ar-Rahmān: "Finish thy work forthwith or flames of discord will burst forth." "Silence, ye people!" cried 'Abd ar-Rahmān. "Be quiet, or ye will bring evil on yourselves. The determination of this matter rests with me." So saying, he called 'Ali to the front:—"Dost thou bind thyself by the covenant of the Lord to do all according to the Book of the Lord, the example of the Prophet, and the precedent of his Successors?" "I hope," responded 'Ali, "that I should do so; I will act according to the best of my knowledge and ability." Then he put the same question to 'Othmān, who answered unconditionally.—"Yea, I will." Whereupon, either dissatisfied with 'Ali's hesitating answer, or having already decided in his mind against him, 'Abd ar-Rahmān raised his face toward heaven, and taking 'Othmān by the hand, prayed thus aloud:—"O Lord do Thou hearken now and bear me witness. Verily the burden that is around my neck, the same do I place round the neck of 'Othmān." So saying, he saluted him as Caliph, and the people followed his example.

1st Moharram 24 A.H. Nov. 7, 644 A.D.

His inaugural address.

It was the first day of the New year, the 24th of the Hijra. After two or three days spent in receiving the homage of the people, 'Othmān ascended the pulpit, and made a brief and modest speech. "The first attempt," he said, "was always difficult, for he was unused to speak in public. It would be his duty in the future to address them, and the Lord would teach him how."

'Ali's party discontented.

Though 'Ali, like the rest, took the oath of allegiance, yet his partisans were much displeased, and he himself upbraided 'Abd ar-Rahmān bitterly with the desire to keep the supreme power out of the Prophet's house and brotherhood. "Beware," said 'Abd ar-Rahmān, with prophetic

[1] To understand the taunts here bandied, it must be remembered that Ibn abi Sarh was the foster-brother of 'Othmān, and bore a bad repute, as we shall see further on: and that 'Ammār was son of a bondmaid called Sumeiya.

voice,—"take heed that, speaking thus, thou makest not a way against thyself, whereof thou shalt repent hereafter." And so 'Alī passed out with the words of Jacob on his lips; "Surely patience becometh me. The Lord is my helper against that which ye devise."[1] Shortly after, Ṭalḥa returned to Medīna. 'Othmān acquainted him with what had happened, and as his vote would have ruled the majority, declared that if he dissented, he was prepared even then to resign the Caliphate. But on learning that all the people had agreed, Ṭalḥa also swore allegiance. A.H. 24.

The choice thus made by 'Abd ar-Raḥmān sowed the seeds of sad disaster. It led to dissensions which for years bathed the Muslim world in blood, threatened the existence of the Faith, and to this day divide believers in hopeless and embittered schism. But 'Abd ar-Raḥmān could hardly have anticipated the wanton, weak, and wavering policy of 'Othmān, which slowly but surely brought about these results. There is no reason to think that, in discharging his functions as Umpire, he acted otherwise than loyally and, as he thought, for the best.[2] The choice disastrous for Islām.

An embarrassing incident followed the accession of 'Othmān. Some one told 'Obeidallah, son of the deceased Caliph, that Abu Lu'lu'a had been seen shortly before in private converse with Al-Hormuzān, the Persian prince, and with a Christian slave belonging to Sa'd; and that, when surprised, the three separated, dropping a poniard such as that with which the assassin had wounded 'Omar. Rashly assuming a conspiracy, the infuriated 'Obeidallah rushed with drawn sword to avenge his father's death, and slew both the Murder of Hormuzān and affair of 'Omar's son.

[1] Sūra xii. 18.

[2] He discharged the invidious task as a loyal and unselfish patriot. Night and day engaged in canvassing the sentiments of the leading chiefs, he did his best to compose the antagonistic claims of the Electors. The immediate cause of his nominating 'Othmān is not easy to find. 'Abbāsid traditions assume it to have been the conscientious scruples of 'Alī in hesitating to swear that he would follow strictly the precedents of Abu Bekr and of 'Omar. The Ḳor'ān and the precedent of Moḥammad he would implicitly obey, but the precedent of the first Caliphs only so far as he agreed with them. In the tenor of the traditions relating how 'Abd ar-Raḥmān first questioned 'Alī and then 'Othmān, and in their replies, I hardly find sufficient ground for this assumption; and it looks very much of a piece with the 'Abbāsid fabrications of later days.

A.H. 24.

prince and the slave. Sa'd, incensed at the loss of his slave, seized 'Obeidallah, still reeking with his victims' blood, and carried him, as the murderer of a believer (for Al-Hormuzan had professed the Muslim faith), before the Caliph. A council was called. There was not a tittle of evidence, or presumption even, of the supposed conspiracy. 'Ali conceived that, according to the law, 'Obeidallah must be put to death as having slain a believer without due cause. Others were shocked at the proposal.—"But yesterday," they said, "the Commander of the Faithful lost his life, and to-day thou wilt put his son to death!" Moved by the appeal, 'Othman assumed the responsibility of naming a money compensation in lieu of blood, and this he paid himself. Some feeling was excited, and people said that the Caliph was already departing from the strict letter of the law. The poet, Ibn Lebid, satirised both the murderer, and the Caliph who had let him off, in stinging verse; but he was silenced. So the matter dropped, and there is no reason to think that the judgment was generally disapproved.

'Othmān increases stipends.

One of 'Othman's first acts was to increase the stipends of the chief men all round, by the addition to each of one hundred dirhems. The act, no doubt, was popular, but it gave promise of extravagance in the new administration.

CHAPTER XXVIII

CALIPHATE OF 'OTHMĀN. GENERAL REVIEW

24-35 A.H. 644-656 A.D.

Causes of 'Othman's unpopularity.

THE reign of 'Othmān lasted twelve years. It is usual to say that the first six were popular, and the last six the reverse; in other words, that during his later years the tide turned, and, discontent ripening into sedition, the storm burst with gathered fury upon the aged Caliph. This is true to some extent; but in reality the causes of unpopularity were busily at work from the very first. They were two-fold, as has been already noticed; first, antagonism between the Arab nation at large and Ḳoreish; and second, jealousy among Ḳoreish themselves,—namely, between the house of Hashim and that of Umeiya, to which latter 'Othmān and Mu'āwiya belonged.

1. Antagonism between Arab tribes and Ḳoreish.

The Arab soldiery, flushed with the glory and fruits of victory, were spread all over the Empire. In Syria, they were held in check by the powerful hand of Mu'āwiya, strengthened by the large body of influential Citizens from Mecca and Medina settled there. But in other lands, conscious of their power, the Arab tribes were rapidly getting the bit between their teeth. Their arrogant and factious spirit had its focus in Al-Kufa and in Al-Baṣra; in both these cities, indeed, it had already under 'Omar shown itself; for even he had not been able effectually to curb their insolence. The Arabs were impatient of control, partly because the success of Islam was due to their arms; partly because, in the brotherhood of the Faith, all Believers, specially those of Arab blood, stood on equal ground. The power of the Caliph, indeed, as successor to the Prophet, was absolute, uncontrolled by any constitutional authority whatever. But even he, yielding to popular sentiment, not only

A.H. 24-35.

took counsel on critical occasions with the leading men around him, but, as a rule, held himself bound by the same, and enjoined the like on his lieutenants. And so it was that in the concessions which he made to the clamour of the citizens of Al-Ba-ra and Al-Kufa, 'Omar had already set a baneful lesson to his successor, and given to those constituencies a foretaste of power which they were not slow to take advantage of. Thus the turbulent spirit grew from day to day - a spirit of opposition to authority, and impatience of Koreishite rule.

2. Jealousy between houses of Hâshim and Umeiya.

The second cause, less threatening to Islâm at large, was more insidious and fraught with greater danger to the Caliphate, and to the person of 'Othmân himself. Had Koreish rallied loyally around the throne, they might have nipped the Arab faction in the bud. But the weakness of 'Othmân, and the partiality with which he favoured his own relations, stirred the jealousy of the house of Hâshim, which began now to vaunt the claims of 'Alî and the Prophet's family, and to depreciate the Umeiyad branch to which the Caliph belonged. That branch, unfortunately for the Umeiyads, had been the tardiest to recognise the mission of the Prophet; and those on whom 'Othmân now lavished his favour were amongst the earliest and most inveterate opponents of Islâm. Every expression uttered by Mohammad during that period of bitter enmity was now raked up and used to blacken their names, and cast discredit on a Government which promoted them to power and honour. Thus Koreish were divided; rivalry paralysed their influence, and 'Othmân lost the support which would otherwise have enabled him to crush the machinations of the Arab malcontents. Still worse, 'Alî and his party lent themselves to the disloyal policy of the Bedawî faction, which was fast sapping the foundations of the Caliphate, and which, as 'Alî should have foreseen, would in the end, if he succeeded to the throne, recoil against himself.

Factious spirit diverted by military service.

It was not, however, till later on that these influences, though early at work, assumed dangerous prominence. This was in great measure due to the military operations which, busily pursued in all directions throughout the twelve years of 'Othmân's caliphate, served to divert attention from domestic trouble. Expeditions, as we have seen, had been

from time to time directed towards the East, and the various provinces brought more or less under tributary subjection. Shortly after the death of 'Omar, a general rising took place in Persia, and so, in order to restore Muslim supremacy, a series of enterprises were, by command of 'Othmān, set on foot. Ibn 'Āmir, governor of Al-Baṣra, having first reduced the adjoining province of Fars, inaugurated a great campaign in the north and east. The land was overrun, and the strongholds, after they had been either stormed or had surrendered at discretion, were ordinarily left in the hands of native Princes on condition of a heavy tribute. Nīsāpūr, taken by the treachery of one of the Marzubans who were over the quarters of the town, was assessed at a million, and Merv at a million and a quarter pieces; and so on with the other States. Sarakhs surrendered on quarter being given for a hundred lives; but in furnishing the list of names, the Marzuban forgot his own, and so was beheaded with the rest of the fighting men. A great battle was fought at Khwarizm on the Oxus, and the country as far as Balkh and Ṭukhāristān forced to acknowledge the Caliph's suzerainty. Having achieved these splendid victories, in which were taken 40,000 captives, Ibn 'Āmir set out for Mecca, on a pilgrimage of thanksgiving. The Lieutenants whom he left to prosecute the campaign restored authority at the point of the sword in the revolted parts of Kirmān and Sijistān, and brought under obedience the chiefs as far as Herāt, Kābul, and Ghazna.[1] The control must, however, as yet have been but slight and desultory; for long years after, we find these outlying provinces continually rising against Muslim rule, and again for the time asserting independence. Kirmān, however, and the nearer parts were held under a more substantial sway; forts were erected, water-courses dug, and the land divided among the conquerors; and so settled rule gradually extended eastward. It was not till the eighth year of 'Othman's reign that Yezdejird died. There are

A.H. 24-35.

Campaigns in the East, 31 A.H. 652 A.D.

31 A.H. 652 A.D.

[1] Idolatry long prevailed throughout these parts. In Sijistān, the general seized the shrine of an idol made of gold with eyes of rubies. The arms he cut off, and took out the rubies. "Here," said he, as he gave them back to the Prince, "these are thine; this I did only to let thee know that this thing can neither hurt thee nor can it do thee good." It may have been a Buddhist idol; but of Buddhism as a religion we hear little or nothing in this direction.

A.H. 24-35.

various accounts of his wanderings in the East after the battle of Nihâvend, destitute and helpless; but they all agree in the fact that about this time, taking shelter in a miller's hut he was there assassinated, and that he was buried with reverence by the Metropolitan of Merv.[1] The knowledge that the line of Annsharwân was now at an end, tended no doubt to the pacification of the East.

Turks and Khazar, 32 A.H. 653 A.D.

Although upon the whole the progress of the Muslims was steadily forward, there were still reverses, and these not seldom of a serious kind. An arduous campaign was carried on during this reign against the hordes of Turks and Khazar, to the west of the Caspian Sea. In the year 32 A.H. these gained so signal an advantage in the mountainous passes of Azerbijân, that in the discomfiture which followed the Arab leaders and a great body of the veterans were slain. To retrieve the disaster, 'Othmân ordered levies from Syria to reinforce the Kûfan army. Bad blood bred between the two: the Syrians refused to serve under a General commanding troops from Al-Kûfa; and altercation ensued which nearly led to bloodshed. This, adds the historian, was the first symptom of the breach between the Kufans and the men of Syria, which subsequently broke out into prolonged hostility. About the same time, a whole army was lost in deep snow upon the heights of Kirmân, only two men escaping to tell the tale. There were also some alarming losses in Turkestân. But Arabia continued to cast forth its swarms of fighting tribes in such vast numbers, and the wild fanaticism of the Faith still rolled on so rapidly, that such disasters soon disappeared in the swelling tide of conquest.

Syria entirely under Mu'âwiya.

Syria had by this time come entirely under Mu'âwiya. On the death of his brother Yezîd, 'Omar gave him the government of Damascus; and as the other governors passed away, their districts fell successively into his hands; till at last, early in the reign of 'Othmân, to whom as of the Umeiyad line Mu'âwiya was closely related, the entire Province came

[1] We have this in two different traditions. The Bishop summoned the Christians (who would seem to have been at this time a substantial body), and recounting the benefits they had received from the Persian dynasty, made them build a church or shrine over the remains which were buried there.

to be administered by him. Excepting raids of little import, Syria had for some time enjoyed rest, when suddenly in the second year of 'Othmān's caliphate, Mu'awiya was startled by the approach of an army from Asia Minor, which he had not the means to oppose. Help was ordered from the eastern provinces, and 8000 volunteers soon joined the Syrian army. Thus reinforced, the Arabs repulsed the Byzantine attack. Following up the success, they overran Asia Minor, and passing through Armenia, reached Ṭabaristan, thus forming a junction with their comrades, on the eastern shore of the Caspian. Then turning north, they marched as far as Tiflis, and reached even to the Black Sea. Thereafter hostilities with the Greeks were renewed every summer, and eventually, aided by naval expeditions from the ports of Africa, the Syrian generals pushed forward their conquests in the Levant and Asia Minor, strengthened their border, and enlarged their coasts. A few years before the death of 'Othmān, Mu'āwiya, accompanied by his Bedawi wife, Meisūn, headed one of these expeditions along the coast to the very precincts of Constantinople; and returning by 'Ammūriya (Amorion), destroyed many fortresses on the way.

A.H. 24-35.

Fighting with Greeks, 26 A.H. 647 A.D.

In Africa, I have already noticed the desperate attack made early in this reign on Alexandria from seaward; the Byzantine forces on that occasion actually regained possession of the City, but were shortly after driven out by 'Amr; and against the Muslim power in Egypt no further attack was for the present made. Farther to the west, however, the Byzantine arms remained long in force; and along the shores washed by the Mediterranean strong Arab columns were still actively engaged against them. Among the chiefs who had joined the Egyptian army was 'Abdallah ibn Sa'd ibn abi Sarḥ, already noticed as the foster-brother of 'Othman. He bore no enviable reputation in Islam. Employed by Mohammad to record his revelations, he had proved unfaithful to the trust; and on the capture of Mecca, was by the Prophet proscribed from the general amnesty, and only at the intercession of 'Othman escaped death. An able administrator, he was appointed by 'Omar to the government of Upper Egypt, when he advanced on Nubia. But some years after, he fell out with 'Amr, in whom was

Africa, 25 A.H. 646 A.D.

A.H. 24-35.

'Amr superseded by Ibn abi Sarḥ, 26 A.H. 647 A.D.

vested the supreme control. Each appealed to 'Othmān, who declared 'Amr to be in fault, and deposed him from the revenue and civil control. 'Amr objected. "To be over the army," he said, "and not over the revenue, was like holding the cow's horns while another milked her." He repaired angrily to 'Othmān, who, after some words of bitter altercation, transferred the whole administration into the hands of Ibn abi Sarḥ. The act was unfortunate for the Caliph. It threw 'Amr into the ranks of the disaffected; while the bad repute of Ibn abi Sarḥ, "the renegade," as they called him, gave point to the charges of partiality and nepotism now rife against 'Othmān.[1]

Conquests in Africa, 26 A.H. 647 A.D.

Ibn abi Sarḥ, left thus in sole command, carried his arms vigorously along the coast beyond Tripoli and Barka, and even threatened Carthage. Gregory, as its governor, reinforced by the Emperor, advanced against him with an army, we are told, of 120,000 men. 'Othmān, warned of the danger, sent a large contingent to Ibn abi Sarḥ's help, with which marched a numerous company of "Companions." The field was long and hotly contested; and Ibn abi Sarḥ, to stimulate his troops, promised the hand of Gregory's daughter with a large dower, to the warrior who should slay her father. The enemy was at last discomfited with great slaughter, and a citizen of Medina gained the lady for his prize. He carried her off on his camel to Medina; and the martial verses which he sang by the way are still preserved.[2] In this campaign, 'Othmān incurred much odium by granting Ibn abi Sarḥ a fifth part of the royal fifth of booty as personal prize. The rest was sent as usual to Medina; and here again 'Othmān is blamed for allowing Merwān his cousin to become the purchaser of it at an altogether inadequate price.

It is, however, as the first commander of a Muslim fleet that Ibn abi Sarḥ is chiefly famous, in which capacity he

[1] Ibn abi Sarḥ narrowly escaped execution at the capture of Mecca (*Life of Mohammad*, p. 410 f.). Party spirit now freely magnified his offence, and he was abused as the person alluded to in Sūra vi. 93: "Who is more wicked than he who saith, *I will produce a revelation like unto that which the Lord hath sent down.*" See Sale *in loco.*

The campaign furnishes plentiful material for the romances of the pseudo-Wāḳidi and later writers. According to some, the maiden leaped from the camel, and being killed escaped thus her unhappy fate.

added largely to the conquests of Islām; while, on the other hand, his undue elevation aroused keen jealousy contributing anew to the obloquy cast on his Master's name. Mu'āwiya had long keenly missed the support of a fleet, and in fact had sought permission from 'Omar to embark his soldiery in ships. "The isles of the Levant," he wrote, "are close to the Syrian shore; you might almost hear the barking of the dogs and cackling of the hens; give me leave to attack them." But 'Omar dreaded the sea, and wrote to consult 'Amr, who answered thus:—"The sea is a boundless expanse, whereon great ships look tiny specks; nought but the heavens above and waters beneath; when calm, the sailor's heart is broken; when tempestuous, his senses reel. Trust it little, fear it much. Man at sea is an insect on a splinter, now engulfed, now scared to death." On receipt of this alarming account, 'Omar forbade Mu'āwiya to have anything to do with ships;—"The Syrian sea, they tell me, is longer and broader than the dry land, and is instant with the Lord, night and day, seeking to swallow it up. How should I trust my people on its accursed bosom? Remember Al-'Ala.[1] Nay, my friend, the safety of my people is dearer to me than all the treasures of Greece."

A.H. 24-34.

Naval operations forbidden by 'Omar,

Nothing, therefore, was attempted by sea in the reign of 'Omar. But on his death, Mu'āwiya reiterated the petition, and 'Othmān at last relaxed the ban on condition that maritime service should be voluntary. The first fleet equipped against Cyprus, in the 28th year of the Hijra, was commanded by Abu Ḳeis as admiral; it was joined by Ibn abi Sarḥ with a complement of ships manned by Egyptians, and Arab warriors from Alexandria. Cyprus was taken easily, and a great multitude of captives carried off. The Cypriots agreed to pay the same revenue as they had done to the Emperor; and the Caliph, unable as yet to guarantee their protection, remitted the poll-tax.[2] Of Abu Ḳeis we are told that he headed fifty expeditions by land

but undertaken by 'Othmān.

Cyprus occupied, 28 A.H. 649 A.D.

[1] *Supra*, p. 168.

[2] [There is still in Cyprus a shrine called *Khal'at Sultān Tekya*, dedicated to Um Haram, wife of an officer in this expedition. Accompanying her husband on the island, she fell from her mule and died, and so this shrine was dedicated to her.—*Asiatic Society's Journal*, January 1896, art. vi. p. 81. 3rd Ed.]

A.H. 21-35. and by sea, but was killed at last while engaged in exploring a Grecian seaport. The island of Rhodes was occupied a few years later.

Naval victory off Alexandria, 31 A.H. / 652 A.D.

Three years after the fall of Cyprus, driven now from the harbours of Africa, and seriously threatened in the Levant, the Byzantines gathered a fleet of some 500 vessels, and defied the Arabs. Ibn abi Sarh was appointed to answer the challenge. He manned every available ship in the ports of Egypt and Africa; and his squadron, though inferior in weight and equipment to the Enemy's, was crowded with valiant warriors from the army. The Byzantine fleet came in sight near Alexandria. The wind lulled, and both sides lay for a while at anchor. The night was passed by the Muslims in recitation of the Kur'ān and prayer, while the Greeks kept up the clangour of their bells. In the morning, a fierce engagement took place. The Arab ships grappled with their adversaries, and a hand-to-hand encounter with sword and dagger ensued. The slaughter was great on both sides; but the Greeks, unable to withstand the wild onset of the Saracens, broke and dispersed. The Byzantine commander sailed away to Syracuse, where the people, infuriated at the defeat, despatched him in his bath.[1]

Obloquy cast on 'Othman.

This splendid victory notwithstanding, discontent against 'Othmān now for the first time found free and dangerous expression among the leading Companions in the fleet. They murmured thus against the Caliph:—"'Othman hath changed the ordinances of his predecessors, he hath made Admiral a man whom the Prophet would have put to death; and such like men also hath he put in chief command at Al-Kūfa, Al-Basra, and elsewhere." The clamour reaching the ears of Ibn abi Sarh, he declared that none of the malcontents should fight in his line of battle. Excluded thus, they were the more incensed. Spite of the threats of Ibn abi Sarh, the inflammatory language spread, and men began to speak openly and unadvisedly against 'Othmān.

Outlook darkens.

The clouds were louring, and the horizon of the Caliph darkened all around.

[1] According to Theophanes, it was Constans II. who so perished, but at a later date. See Gibbon, chap. xlviii.

CHAPTER XXIX

DOMESTIC EVENTS DURING THE LATTER DAYS OF 'OTHMĀN. HIS GROWING UNPOPULARITY

30-34 A.H. 651-655 A.D.

Discontent at Kūfa and Baṣra.

AL-KŪFA and Al-Baṣra at this period exercised an influence on the destinies of Islām hardly less potent than that of Medina itself. The turbulent and factious atmosphere of these cities became rapidly charged with a spirit of disloyalty and rebellion, aggravated by the weak and unwise change of their governors.

Sa'd reinstated at Kūfa, 34 A.H. 654 A.D.

Al-Moghira did not long enjoy the command at Al-Kūfa. He was removed by 'Othmān, who, to fill the vacancy, in obedience (some say) to the dying wish of 'Omar, reinstated Sa'd in his former office. The issue again was unsuccessful. To provide for his luxurious living, Sa'd took an advance from Ibn Mas'ūd, chancellor of the treasury, who, by and by, became importunate for repayment. A heated altercation ensued, and Sa'd swore angrily at Ibn Mas'ūd. The factious city ranged itself, part with the great warrior, and part with the *quondam* slave and attendant on the Prophet. The quarrel reached the ears of 'Othmān, who, much displeased, recalled Sa'd before he had been a year in office. As successor, the Caliph appointed Al-Welīd ibn 'Oḳba, a brave warrior, but suspected of intemperance, and withal a uterine brother of his own. The choice was all the more unfortunate, because Al-Welīd was son of that 'Oḳba who, when taken prisoner at the battle of Bedr and about to be put to death, exclaimed in the bitterness of his soul, "Who will care for my little children?" and was answered by the Prophet, "Hell-fire!"[1] The words were not forgotten, and faction was

Superseded by Welīd ibn 'Oḳba,

[1] *Life of Moḥammad*, p. 230.

A.H. 30-34. careful now to turn them to account. Nevertheless, Al-Welid was popular; and as he commanded successive campaigns in the East with gallantry and vigour, he managed for a time to divert the restless spirits from discontent at home. But in the end, the unruly populace was too strong for him. A murder took place, and sentence of death was executed at the City gate against the culprits. Their relatives resented the act of justice, and watched for ground of accusation against the Governor, whose habits gave them ready opportunity. Charges of intemperance were repeatedly dismissed by 'Othmān for want of legal proof. At last his enemies succeeded in detaching from his hand the signet ring of office while he slept from the effects of a debauch, and carried it off in triumph to Medina. But still worse, it was established that Al-Welīd had conducted the morning Prayers in such a state that, having come to the proper end of the service, he went on, without stopping, to commence another. The scandal was great; and the majesty of Islām must be vindicated. Al-Welīd was recalled to Medina, scourged according to law, and deposed.

who is deposed for inebriety.

Abu Mūsa deposed at Baṣra, 29 A.H. 650 A.D.

At Al-Baṣra, too, things were going from bad to worse. Abu Mūsa had now been many years Governor, when the restless citizens became impatient of his rule. He had been preaching to the pampered soldiery the virtue of enduring hardness, and going forth on foot to war. When the next expedition was ready, they watched to see whether he would himself set the example. As his ample baggage issued forth, winding from the castle on a long string of mules, they set upon him, crying, "Give us of these beasts to ride upon, and walk thou on foot, a pattern of the hardness thou preachest unto us." Then they repaired to Medina, and complained that he had drained the land of its wealth, pampered Koreish, and tyrannised over the Arab tribes. Instead of checking their petulance with promptitude, 'Othmān gave it new life by deposing Abu Mūsa, and appointing a certain obscure citizen whom they desired, to be their Governor. Found unequal to the post, this man was deposed, and a youthful cousin of the Caliph, Ibn 'Āmir, promoted in his room. When tidings of his nomination reached Al-Baṣra, Abu Mūsa said: "Now ye shall have a tax-gatherer to your hearts' content, rich in cousins, aunts, and uncles, who will

flood you with his harpies!" And so it turned out; for he soon filled the local offices and the commands in Persia with creatures of his own. In other respects, however, he proved an able ruler; his signal victories in the East have been already noticed, and in the struggle now close at hand he took a leading part. A.H. 30-34.

Sa'id Governor of Kūfa, 30 A.H. 651 A.D.

The government of Al-Kūfa, vacated by the deposition of Al-Welid, was conferred by 'Othmān, together with that of Mesopotamia, upon another young and untried kinsman, Sa'id ibn al-'Āṣ. His father was killed fighting against the Prophet at Bedr; and the boy, thus left an orphan had been brought up by 'Omar, who eventually sent him to the wars in Syria. Receiving a good account of his breeding and prowess, 'Omar summoned him to his court, and gave him two Arab maidens to wife.[1] This youth, now promoted to the most critical post in the empire, was not only without experience in the art of governing, but, vainly inflated with the pretensions of Ḳoreish, made no account of the powerful Bedawi faction. Accustomed in Syria to the strong discipline of Mu'āwiya, he wrote to 'Othman, on reaching Al-Kūfa, that licence reigned in the city, that noble birth passed for nothing, and that the Bedawin were altogether out of hand. His first address as Governor was a blustering harangue, in which he glibly talked of crushing the sedition and arrogance of the men of Al-Kufa with a rod of iron. Countenanced in his overbearing course by the Caliph, he fomented discontent by invidious advancement of the Ḳoreishite nobility, and by treating with contumely the great body of the Citizens. "One Ḳoreishite succeedeth another as our governor," they said; "the last no better than the first. It is but out of the frying-pan into the fire." The under-current of faction daily gained strength and volume. But the vigorous campaigns of Sa'id in northern Persia, for he was an active soldier, served for a time to occupy men's minds, and to stay the open exhibition of a rebellious spirit.

Discontent gains ground at Kūfa.

Meanwhile other causes were at work—some apparently insignificant in themselves, but turned adroitly to account

[1] He was nephew to the Khālid who opened so ingloriously the Syrian campaign. Not satisfied with this pair of wives, he had a numerous *ḥarim*, and left twenty sons and as many daughters.

A.H. 30-34.

Recension of Kor'ân, 30 A.H. 651 A.D.

by the enemies of 'Othmân. First was the recension of the Kor'ân. The Muslim armies spread over such vast areas and, as well as the converted peoples, were so widely separated one from another, that differences were arising in the recitation of the sacred text, as it had been settled in the previous reign. Al-Basra followed the reading of Abu Musa; Al-Kufa was guided by the authority of Ibn Mas'ûd; and the text of Hims differed from that in use even at Damascus. Hodheifa, during his long campaign in Persia and Azerbijan, having witnessed the variations in different provinces, returned to Al-Kufa gravely impressed with the urgent need of revision. Ibn Mas'ûd was highly incensed with the slight thus put upon the authority of his text. But Hodheifa, supported by the Governor, urged 'Othmân to restore the unity of the divine word, "before that believers begin to differ in their scripture, even as the Jews and Christians."[1] The Caliph, advised by the leading Companions at Medina, called for copies of the manuscripts in use throughout the Empire. He then appointed a syndicate of experts from amongst Koreish, to collate these with the sacred originals still in the keeping of Hafsa. Under their supervision the variations were reconciled, and an authoritative exemplar written out, of which duplicates were deposited at Mecca, Medina, Al-Kufa, and Damascus. Copies were multiplied over the empire; former manuscripts called in and committed to the flames; and the standard text brought into exclusive use. The action of 'Othmân was received at the moment, as it deserved, with general consent, excepting at Al-Kufa. There Ibn Mas'ûd, who prided himself on his faultless recitation of the oracle, pure as it fell from the Prophet's lips, was much displeased; and the charge of sacrilege in having burned copies of the divine Word was readily seized on by the factious Citizens. By and by, the cry was spread abroad; and, taken up with avidity by the enemies of 'Othmân, we find it ages afterwards still eagerly urged

[1] [Referring apparently (not to the originals, but) to the translations of the Bible in the various languages of the countries into which Christianity spread. The Kor'ân was held too sacred to be translated, and was only (as still) read in its original Arabic, whatever the language of the people. 3rd Ed.]

by the partisans of the 'Abbāsid dynasty as an unpardonable offence committed by the ungodly Caliph. The accusation thus trumped up was really without foundation. Indeed, it was scouted by 'Alī himself. When, several years after, as Caliph, he found the citizens of Al-Kufa still blaming his ill-starred predecessor for the act;—"Silence!" he cried; "'Othman acted with the advice of the leading men amongst us; and had I been ruler at the time, I should myself have done the same."[1] A.H. 30-34.

A great body of the nobility from Mecca and Medina about this time transferred their residence to Al-Kufa and Al-Baṣra. These had no right to share in the endowments of Al-'Irāḳ, the special privileges of which, in virtue of conquest, were reserved for the original settlers. They were allowed, however, now to do so on condition that they surrendered their properties in the Ḥijāz. The concession afforded fresh ground for discontent at the extravagant pretensions of Ḳoreish. Many Ḳoreish migrate to 'Irāḳ.

The story of Abu Dharr is singularly illustrative of the times, and his treatment formed one of the grounds of complaint against the Caliph.[2] He was an early convert to the Faith; and is said even to have anticipated Moḥammad in some of the observances of Islām. An ascetic in habit, he inveighed against the riches and indulgences of the day as altogether alien from the Faith, and as evils which, rushing in like a flood, were now demoralising the people. Gorgeous palaces, crowds of slaves, horses and camels, flocks and herds, costly garments, sumptuous fare, and splendid equipage were the fashion, not only in Syria and Al-'Irāḳ, but even now within the Holy Cities.[3] The protest of Abu Dharr was Abu Dharr Al-Ghifāri.

[1] On this recension, see Excursus on the "Sources for the Biography of Moḥammad," in the *Life of Moḥammad*. The manner in which the 'Abbasid faction perverted the facts and turned the charge to malignant purpose against the Umeiyad house, is well illustrated in the *Apology of Al Kindy*, pp. 25 *et seq.* The charge against Al-Ḥajjāj is equally groundless.—*Ibid.* p. xi.

[2] Ibn-Ḳoteiba, p. 130.

[3] Al-Mas'ūdi dwells on this as one of the causes of demoralisation and disloyalty now setting in so rapidly, and he gives some remarkable instances. *Az-Zubeir* had 1000 slaves, male and female, and 1000 horses. At all the great cities he had palaces, and the one at Al Baṣra

A.H. 30-34. the natural recoil of a strict and fervid believer from the graceless and licentious luxury of the day: but it was seized by the discontented classes as a weapon against the Government. Visiting Syria, the ascetic, whose spirit was stirred at the pomps and vanities around him, preached repentance. "This gold and silver of yours," he cried, "shall one day be heated red-hot in the fire of hell; and therewith shall ye be scared in your foreheads, sides, and backs, ye ungodly spendthrifts![1] Wherefore, spend now the same in alms, leaving yourselves enough but for your daily bread; else woe be unto you in that day!" Crowds flocked round him at Damascus, some trembling under his rebuke; others rejoicing at the contempt poured on the rich and noble; while the people at large were dazzled by the vision of sharing in the treasures of the classes thus denounced. Uneasy at the disturbing effect of these diatribes, Mu'awiya resolved to test the spirit of the preacher. He sent him a purse of 1000 pieces, and in the morning, affecting to have made a mistake, demanded its return; but during the night Abu Dharr had distributed the whole in charity. On this, Mu'awiya, convinced of his sincerity, and apprehensive of the spread of his socialistic doctrines, despatched the preacher to Medina, telling 'Othmān that he was an honest but misguided enthusiast. Before the Caliph, Abu Dharr persisted in fearlessly denouncing the great and wealthy, and urged that they should be forced to disgorge their riches. 'Othmān condescended to reason with him. "When once men have fulfilled their obligations," he asked, "what power remaineth with me to compel any further sacrifice?" and he turned to Ka'b, a learned Jewish convert, to confirm what he had said. "Out upon thee, son of a

was still to be seen in the fourth century A.H. His landed estate in Al-'Irak was rated at 1000 golden pieces a day. *'Abd ar-Raḥmān* had 1000 camels, 10,000 sheep, and left property valued at four hundred thousand dinārs. *Zeid* left gold and silver in great ingots, and had land valued at 10,000 dinārs. The Koreishite nobles built themselves grand palaces in Mecca and Medina and their environs. 'Othmān himself had a splendid palace at Medina, with marble pillars, walls of costly stucco, grand gates and gardens; he also amassed vast treasures.

[1] Sura ix. 35; originally applied to Christian priests and monks.—*Life of Mohammad*, p. 454.

Jew! What have I to do with thee?" cried Abu Dharr, smiting Ka'b violently on the stomach. Argument being thus of no further use, 'Othmān banished the preacher to Ar-Rabadha in the desert, where two years after he died in penury. Finding the end approach, the hermit desired his daughter to slay a kid, and have it ready for a party of travellers who, he said, would shortly pass that way to Mecca; then, making her turn his face toward the Ka'ba, he quietly breathed his last. Soon after, the expected party came up, and amongst them Ibn Mas'ūd from Al-Kūfa, who, weeping over the departed saint, bewailed his fate, and buried him on the spot, which became one of holy memory. The death of Ibn Mas'ūd himself, a few days after, added to the pathos of the incident. The plaintive tale was soon in everyone's mouth; and the banishment of the famous preacher of righteousness was made much of by the enemies of the Caliph. The necessity for it was forgotten, but the obloquy remained.[1]

A.H. 30-34.

Obloquy on his banishment, 30 A.H., 651 A.D.

When himself minded to assume the office of censor and rebuke the ungodliness of the day, the unfortunate Caliph fared no better. The laxity of Syria had reached even to the sacred precincts of the Hijāz; and 'Othmān, on attempting to check the games and other practices held to be inconsistent with the profession of Islām, incurred resentment, especially from the gay youth whose amusements he thwarted. Gambling and wagering, indeed, were put down with the approval of the stricter classes of society; but there

Amusements at Medīna put down.

[1] Attempts are made by 'Abbāsid tradition to show that Abu Dharr was driven into opposition by the tyranny of Mu'āwiya's rule, and by divers ungodly practices permitted by 'Othmān at Medīna. But Ibn al-Athīr justly doubts this, and distinctly says that his preaching tended to excite the poor against the rich. Abu Dharr's doctrines were based on the equality of believers; and the danger lay in their popularity with the Socialists, who decried the pretensions of Ḳoreish. Before Mu'āwiya, he reasoned thus: "*Riches*, ye say, *belong unto the Lord;* and thereby ye frustrate the people's right therein; for the Lord hath given them to His people." "Out upon thee!" replied Mu'āwiya; "what is this but a quibble of words? Are we not all of us the Lord's people, and the riches belong unto us all?" Tradition dwells on the want and wretchedness of Abu Dharr's life at Ar-Rabadha, to add point to 'Othmān's unkind treatment. His own tribe are said to have resented his ill-treatment by joining the rebellion.

A.H. 30-34. were not wanting many who, displeased with the Caliph's interference, joined in the cry of his detractors.

Court of the Ka'ba, enlarged, 26 A.H. 647 A.D.,

The enlargement of the grand square of the Ka'ba, commenced by 'Omar, was carried on by 'Othmān while he visited Mecca on pilgrimage. And here, too, the ill-fated Caliph met with opposition. The owners of the demolished houses refused to accept the compensation offered, and raised a great outcry. The Caliph put them into prison, for, said he, "My predecessor did the same, and ye made no outcry against him." But what the firm arm of 'Omar could do, and none stir hand or foot against him, was a different thing for the weak and unpopular 'Othmān to attempt. He was more successful with the Mosque at Medina, originally built by Mohammad, and hallowed by the mortal remains of the Prophet and his two successors. This was now enlarged and beautified. The supports, at first the trunks of date-trees, were removed, and the roof made to rest on pillars of hewn stone. The walls, too, were built up with masonry, richly carved and inlaid with rare and precious stones. It was a pious work, and none objected.

and Mosque of Medina, 32 A.H. 653 A.D.

Changes in pilgrim ceremonial, 32 A.H. 653 A.D.

Yet another cause of murmuring arose from certain changes made by 'Othmān in the ceremonial of the annual Pilgrimage, which, though in themselves trivial and unmeaning, excited strong disapprobation at the Caliph's court. He pitched tents for shelter during the few days spent for sacrifice at Mina, a thing never done before; and, to the prayers heretofore recited there and on Mount 'Arafat, he added new ones, with two more series of prostrations. The ritual, as established by the Prophet himself, had been scrupulously followed by his two successors, and a superstitious reverence attached even to its minutest detail. When expostulated with on the unhallowed innovation, 'Othmān gave no reasonable answer, but simply said it was his will to do so. Disregard of the sacred example of the Founder of the Faith offended many, and raised a cry among the Companions unfavourable to 'Othmān.

Increasing unpopularity.

Again, beyond the immediate circle of his kinsfolk, 'Othmān made no personal friends. Narrow, selfish, indiscreet, and obstinate,—more and more so, indeed, with advancing years,—he alienated those who would otherwise have stood loyally by him, and made many enemies who

pursued him with relentless hatred. Mohammad, son of Abu Bekr, and Mohammad, son of Abu Hodheifa, were among those embittered against him at the naval victory of Alexandria. And yet no very special cause can be assigned for their enmity. The first is said to have been actuated by "passion and ambition." The other, nearly related to 'Othmān, and as an orphan kindly brought up by him, was now offended at being passed over for office and command. Both joined the rebellion which shortly broke out in Egypt, and were amongst the most dangerous of the Caliph's enemies. Nor was it otherwise with the people at large. A factious spirit set in against the unfortunate monarch. The leaven fermented all around; and every man who had a grievance, real or supposed, hastened to swell the hostile cry. A.H. 30-34.

Loss of the Prophet's signet-ring, 29 A.H. 650 A.D.

To crown the Caliph's ill-fortune, in the 7th year, he lost the signet-ring of silver which, engraven for the Prophet, had been worn and used officially both by him and his successors. It was a favourite and meritorious occupation of 'Othmān to deepen the old wells, and to sink new ones, in the neighbourhood of Medina. He was thus engaged when, directing the labourers with his pointed finger, the ring slipped and fell into a well. Every effort was made to recover the priceless relic. The well was emptied, the mud cleared out, and a great reward offered; but no trace of the ring appeared. 'Othman grieved over the loss. The omen weighed heavily on his mind; and it was some time before he consented to supply the lost signet by another of like fashion.

'Othmān marries Nāila, 28 A.H. 649 A.D.

Besides the two daughters of the Prophet, both of whom died before their father, 'Othman had other wives. Three still survived when, in the 5th year of his Caliphate, being then above seventy years of age, he took Naila to wife. Of her previous history we know little more than that, once a Christian, she had embraced Islām. She bore him a daughter; and through all his trials clung faithfully by her aged lord to the bitter end. The days were coming when he needed such a helper by his side.

CHAPTER XXX

DANGEROUS FACTION AT AL-KŪFA. GROWING DISSATISFACTION.

33-34 A.H. 654-655 A.D.

Seditious elements at work.

TOWARDS the close of 'Othmān's reign, the hidden ferment, which (Syria perhaps excepted) had long been everywhere at work, began to make its appearance on the surface. The Arab tribes at large were displeased at the pretensions of Koreish. Koreish themselves were divided and ill at ease, the greater part being jealous of the Umeiyad house and the Caliph's favourites. And temptation to revolt was fostered by the weakness and vacillation of 'Othmān himself.

Ibn as-Saudā preaches sedition in Egypt, 32 A.H. 653 A.D.

Ibn 'Āmir had been now three years governor of Al-Basra, when Ibn Saba' (or, as he is commonly called, Ibn as-Saudā), a Jew from the south of Arabia, appeared there, and professed the desire to embrace Islām. It soon appeared that he was steeped in disaffection towards the existing government,—a firebrand of sedition; as such he was expelled successively from Al-Basra, Al-Kufa, and Syria, but not before he had given a dangerous impulse to the already discontented classes there. At last he found a safe retreat in Egypt, where he became the setter forth of strange and startling doctrines. Mohammad was to come again, even as the Messiah was. Meanwhile 'Alī was his legate.[1] 'Othmān was a usurper, and his governors a set of godless tyrants. Impiety and wrong were rampant every-

[1] What led Ibn as-Saudā (whose name means son of the black woman, his mother being a negress) to entertain transcendental ideas of 'Alī does not appear: and indeed the notices of an "'Alīd sect" at this period sound somewhat anticipatory and unreal. See Ṭab. i. 2942.

where; truth and justice could be restored no otherwise than by the overthrow of this wicked dynasty. Such was the preaching which daily gained ground in Egypt; by busy correspondence it was spread all over the Empire, and startled the minds of men already foreboding evil from the sensible heavings of a slumbering volcano. A.H. 33-34.

Emeute at Kūfa, 33 A.H. 654 A.D.

The outbreak of turbulence was for the moment repressed at Al-Baṣra by Ibn 'Āmir; but at Al-Kūfa, Sa'id had neither power nor tact to quell the factious elements around. At his first public service he had offended even his own party by ostentatiously washing the pulpit steps before ascending a spot pretended to have been made unclean by his drunken predecessor. He was foolish enough not only to foster the arrogant assumptions of Ḳoreish, but to contemn the claims of the Arab soldiery, to whose swords they owed the conquest of the land. He called the beautiful vale of Chaldæa *The Garden of Ḳoreish* — "as if forsooth," cried the offended Arabs, "without *our* strong arm and lances, they ever could have won it." Disaffection, stimulated by the demagogue Al-Ashtar and a knot of factious citizens, culminated at last in an outbreak. As the Governor and a company of the people, according to custom, sat in free and equal converse, the topic turned on the bravery of Ṭalḥa, who had shielded the Prophet in the day of battle. "Ah!" exclaimed Sa'id, "*he* is a warrior, if ye choose, a real gem amongst your Bedawi counterfeits. A few more like him, and we should dwell at ease." The assembly was still nettled at this speech, when a youth incautiously gave expression to the wish, how pleasant it would be if the Governor possessed a certain property which lay invitingly by the river bank near Al-Kufa. "What!" shouted the company, "out of *our* good lands!" And with a torrent of abuse, they leaped upon the lad and his father, and went near to killing both.

Ringleaders exiled to Syria.

To awe the malcontents, emboldened by this outrage, ten of the ringleaders, with Al-Ashtar (of whom more hereafter) at their head, were sent in exile to Syria, where it was hoped that the powerful rule of Mu'awiya and loyal example of the Syrians might inspire them with better feelings. Mu'awiya quartered the exiles in a church; and morning and evening, as he passed by, rated them on their folly in setting up the crude claims of the Bedawin against the in-

A.H. 33-34. defeasible rights of Koreish. Subdued by several weeks of such treatment, they were sent on to Hims, where the Governor subjected them for a month to like indignities. Whenever he rode forth, he showered invectives on them as traitors working to undermine the empire. Their spirit at last was broken, and they were released; but, ashamed to return to Al-Kufa, they remained in Syria, excepting Al-Ashtar, who made his way secretly to Medina.

Sa'id expelled from Kufa, 34 A.H. 655 A.D.

Months passed, and things did not mend at Al-Kufa. Most of the leading men, whose influence could have kept the populace in check, were away on military command in Persia; and the malcontents, in treasonable correspondence with the Egyptian faction, gained head daily. In an unlucky moment, Sa'id planned a visit to Medina, there to lay his troubles before the Caliph. No sooner had he gone than the conspirators came to the front, and recalled the exiles from Syria. Al-Ashtar, too, was soon upon the scene. Taking his stand at the door of the Mosque, he stirred up the people against Sa'id. "He had himself just left that despot," he said, "at Medina, plotting their ruin, counselling the Caliph to cut down their stipends, even the women's; and calling the broad fields which they had conquered *The Garden of Koreish*." The deputy of Sa'id, with the better class of the inhabitants, sought in vain to still the rising storm. He enjoined patience. "Patience!" cried the warrior Al-Ka'ka', in scorn; "ye might as well roll back the great river when in flood, as quell the people's uproar till they have the thing they want." Yezid, brother of one of the exiles, then raised a standard, and called upon the enemies of the tyrant, who was then on his way back, to bar his entry into Al-Kufa. So they marched out as far as Al-Kadisiya, and sent forward to tell Sa'id that "they did not need him any more." Little anticipating such reception, Sa'id remonstrated with them. "It had sufficed," he said, "to have sent a delegate with your complaint to the Caliph; but now ye come forth a thousand strong against a single man!" They were deaf to his expostulations. His servant, endeavouring to push on, was slain by Al-Ashtar; and Sa'id himself fled back to Medina, where he found 'Othman terrified by tidings of the outbreak, and prepared to yield whatever the insurgents might demand. At their desire he appointed Abu Mūsa, late Governor of

Al-Basra, in place of Sa'id. To welcome him the officers in command of garrisons came from all quarters into Al-Kūfa; and Abu Mūsa received them in the crowded Mosque. He first exacted from the inhabitants a pledge of loyalty to the Caliph, and then installed himself by leading the prayers of the great assembly. A.H. 33-34. and Abu Mūsa appointed.

If, instead of thus giving way, 'Othmān had inflicted on the ringleaders of Al-Kūfa condign punishment, he might haply have weathered the storm. It is true that thus he would in all likelihood have precipitated rebellion, not only in that turbulent City, but in Al-Baṣra and Egypt also. Yet, sooner or later, that was unavoidable; and in the struggle he would now have had a strong support. For here the contention was between Koreish with all the nobility of Islām on the one hand, and the Arab tribes and city rabble on the other; and in this question the great leaders would to a man have rallied round the throne. By his pitiable weakness in yielding to the insurgents, 'Othmān not only courted contempt, but lost the opportunity of placing the great controversy about to convulse the Muslim world upon its proper issue. It fell, instead, to the level of a quarrel obscured by personal interests, and embittered by charges of tyranny and nepotism against himself. The crisis was now inevitable. Men saw that 'Othmān lacked the wisdom and strength to meet it, and each looked to his own concern. Seditious letters circulated freely everywhere; and the claims even began to be canvassed of candidates to succeed 'Othmān, who, it was foreseen, could not long hold the reins of empire in his feeble grasp. 'Othmān's fatal mistake.

Thus, even at Medina, sedition spread, and from thence messages reached the provinces far and near that the sword would soon be needed at home, rather than in foreign parts. So general was the contagion that, besides his immediate kindred, but two or three men are named as still faithful to the throne. Moved by the leading Citizens, 'Ali repaired to 'Othman and said:—"The people bid me expostulate with thee. Yet what can I say to thee, who art the son-in-law of the Prophet, as thou wast his bosom friend? The way lieth plain before thee; but thine eyes are blinded that thou canst not see. Blood once shed, will not cease to flow until the Judgment Day. Right blotted out, treason will rage like foaming waves of the sea." 'Othman com- 'Alī expostulates with 'Othmān,

A.H. 33-34. plained, and not without reason, of the unfriendly attitude of 'Ali himself. "For my own part," he said, "I have done my best; and as for the men ye blame me for, did not 'Omar himself appoint Al-Moghira to Al-Kūfa; and if Ibn 'Amir be my kinsman, is he the worse for that?" "No," replied 'Ali; "but 'Omar kept his lieutenants in order, and when they did wrong he punished them; whereas thou treatest them softly because they are thy kinsmen." "And Mu'awiya, too," continued the Caliph, "it was 'Omar who appointed him to Syria." "Yes," answered 'Ali; "yet I swear that even 'Omar's slaves did not stand so much in awe of him as did Mu'awiya. And now he doth whatever he pleaseth, saying, *It is 'Othman.* And thou knowing it all, leavest him alone!" So saying, 'Ali turned and went his way.

who appeals to the people. As 'Ali's message professed to come from the people, 'Othmān went straightway to the pulpit and addressed the assemblage met for prayer. He reproached them for intemperate speech and subserviency to evil leaders, whose object it was to blacken his name, exaggerate his faults, and hide his virtues. "Ye blame me," he said, "for things ye bore cheerfully from 'Omar. He trampled on you, beat you with his whip, and abused you. And ye took it patiently from him, both in what ye liked and what ye disliked. I have been gentle with you; bended my back unto you; withheld my tongue from reviling, and my hand from smiting. And now ye rise up against me!" Then, after dwelling on the prosperity of his reign at home and abroad, and the many benefits accruing therefrom, he ended—"Wherefore, refrain, I entreat of you, from abuse of me and of my governors, lest ye kindle the flames of sedition and revolt throughout the empire." The appeal was marred by his cousin Merwān, who at its close exclaimed, "If ye will oppose the Caliph, we shall soon bring it to the issue of the sword." "Be silent!" cried 'Othmān; "leave me with my fellows alone. Did I not tell thee not to speak?" 'Othmān then descended from the pulpit. The harangue had no effect. The discontent spread, and the gatherings against the Caliph multiplied.[1]

[1] Merwān is always represented by 'Abbāsid tradition as the evil genius of 'Othmān. But the *rôle* he played in this character is no doubt exaggerated.

Thus ended the 11th year of 'Othmán's reign. Near its close was held a memorable council, of which account will be given in the chapter following. The Caliph performed the Pilgrimage as usual. He had done so every year; this was to be his last.

A.H. 33-34.

Close of 'Othmán's 11th year.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE OUTLOOK DARKENS

34-35 A.H. 655 A.D.

'Othmān treated with contumely.

THE unhappy Caliph was now hurried on, by the rapid course of events, helplessly to his end. 'Abd ar-Rahmān, who, no doubt, felt himself responsible from the share he took in the nomination of 'Othmān, was about this time removed by death. But even he had been dissatisfied; and one of the first open denunciations of 'Othmān's unscrupulous disregard of law,—small it might be, but significant,—is attributed to him. A high-bred camel, part of the tithes of a Bedawi tribe, was presented by the Caliph, as a rarity, to one of his kinsfolk. 'Abd ar-Rahmān, scandalised at the misappropriation of what belonged to charity, laid hands upon the animal, slaughtered it, and divided the flesh among the poor. The personal reverence attaching heretofore to the "Successor of the Prophet of the Lord," gave place to slight and disregard. In the streets, 'Othmān was greeted with cries that he should depose Ibn 'Āmir and the godless Ibn abi Sarh, and put away Merwān, his chief adviser and confidant. He had the countenance of none excepting his immediate kinsmen, and reliance upon them only aggravated the hostile clamour.

'Othmān sends delegates to test feeling in provinces.

The conspirators had hitherto burrowed underground. Now their machinations coming to light, rumours of impending treason began to float abroad. The better affected classes throughout the Empire felt uneasy; alarm crept over all hearts. Letters were continually received at Medīna asking what these ominous sounds meant, and what catastrophe was now at hand. The chief men of Medīna kept coming to the Caliph's court for tidings; but,

notwithstanding sullen mutterings of approaching storm, the surface yet was still. At last, by their advice, 'Othmān despatched a trusty follower to each of the great centres, Damascus, Al-Kufa, Al-Baṣra, and Fusṭāṭ, to watch and report whether suspicious symptoms anywhere appeared. Three returned saying that they discovered nothing unusual in the aspect of affairs. The fourth, 'Ammār, was looked for in vain; for he had been gained over by the Egyptian faction. Thereupon 'Othmān despatched a royal edict to all the provinces as follows:—At the coming Pilgrimage the governors from abroad would, according to custom, present themselves at court; whoever had cause against them, should then come forward and substantiate their grievance, when the wrong would be redressed; else it behoved them to withdraw the baseless calumnies that now were troubling men's minds. Proclamation was made accordingly. The plaintive appeal was understood; and people in many places when they heard it wept and invoked mercy on their Caliph. A.H. 34-35.

Conference of governors at Medīna, 34 A.H. 655 A.D.

The governors repaired to Medīna at the time appointed, but no malcontent came forward to make complaint. Questioned by 'Othmān, his lieutenants knew not of any grievance, real and substantial. To the outward eye, everything was calm; and even the royal messengers had returned without finding anything amiss. But all knew of the dangerous sore in the body politic, and of its spreading rapidly. The wretched Caliph invoked their pity and their counsel. But they could offer nothing of which he might lay hold. One advised that the conspirators should be arrested and the ringleaders put to death; another, that the stipends of all disloyal men should be forfeited; a third, that the unquiet spirits amongst the people should be diverted by some fresh campaign; others that the governors should amend their ways. 'Othman was bewildered; one thing only he declared;—to measures of severity he never would assent; the single remedy he could approve was despatch of fresh armies to fight in foreign parts.

Nothing was settled to avert the crisis, and the Governors departed as they came. When Mu'awiya made ready to leave, he entreated 'Othmān to retire with him to Syria, where a loyal people would rally round him. But he

A.H. 34-35.

'Othman declines help from Mu'awiya,

answered: "Even to save my life I will not quit the land wherein the Prophet sojourned, nor the City wherein his sacred body resteth." "Then let me send an army to stand by thee." "Nay, that I will not," responded 'Othman firmly; "I never will put force on those who dwell around the Prophet's home, or quarter bands of armed men upon them." "In that case," replied Mu'awiya, "I see naught but destruction awaiting thee." "Then the Lord be my defence," exclaimed the aged Caliph, "and that sufficeth for me!" "Fare thee well!" said Mu'awiya, as he departed to see his face no more.

who retires, warning 'Ali and Zubeir.

Leaving the City by the road for Syria, Mu'awiya passed a group of Koreish, amongst whom were 'Ali and Az-Zubeir. He stayed for a moment to drop a warning word into their ears. They were drifting back, he said, into the anarchy of "the days of the Ignorance" before Islam. The Lord was a strong Avenger of the weak and injured ones. "To you" —and these were his last words—"to you I commit this helpless aged man. Help him, and it will be the better for you. Fare ye well." So saying he passed on his way. The company remained some time in silence. At last 'Ali spoke: "It will be best done as he hath said." "By the Lord!" added Az-Zubeir, "there never lay a burden heavier on thy breast, nor yet on ours, than this burden of 'Othman's just now."

[1] Quoting from Sûra xxxix. 39.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE PLOT RIPENS. CONSPIRATORS ATTACK MEDĪNA. DEATH OF 'OTHMĀN

35 A.H. 656 A.D.

Plot to surprise Medīna. End of 34 A.H. Summer, 655 A.D.

THE plot now rapidly came to a head. A plan of action had been already formed. While the lieutenants of the Caliph were absent from their posts on the occasion just described, the conspirators were to issue from Al-Kūfa, Al-Baṣra, and Fusṭāṭ, and converge upon Medīna in combined and menacing force. There, in answer to the Caliph's challenge, they would present an endless roll of complaints, and cry loudly for redress, reform, and change of Governors. Denied by 'Othmān, they would demand his abdication, and, in last resort, enforce it by the sword. But as to a successor they were not agreed. Al-Kūfa was for Az-Zubeir; Al-Baṣra for Ṭalḥa; Egypt's favourite was 'Alī.

Conspirators set out for Medīna, ix. 35 A.H. March, 656 A.D.

The scheme miscarried. But some months later, in the middle of the following year, it was revived and secret preparations made for giving it effect. Under pretext of visiting Mecca for the lesser Pilgrimage,[1] the concerted movement at last took place, two or three months before the annual Pilgrimage. Ibn abi Sarḥ, Governor of Egypt, at once despatched a message to apprise 'Othmān. In reply he was ordered to pursue the rebels; he did so, but too late; they had already marched beyond his reach. On turning back he found Egypt in the hands of a traitor, and fleeing for his life, took refuge across the border in Palestine. Among the insurgent leaders of Egypt was Moḥammad son of Abu Bekr.

[1] *Life of Moḥammad*, p. ci. It may be performed any time of the year.

A.H. 35.

Insurgents encamp near Medīna; first retire;

Startled by intelligence that the insurgents were in full march on Medīna, 'Othmān ascended the pulpit and admitted the real object of attack. "It is against myself," he said: "by and by they will look back with a longing eye on my reign, and wish that each day had been a year, because of the bloodshed, anarchy, and ungodliness that will flood the land." The rebels soon appeared, and pitched three separate camps, from Al-Kūfa, from Al-Basra, and from Egypt, in the neighbourhood of the City. The people put on their armour, a thing unheard of since the days of the Apostasy, and prepared for resistance. The insurgents, foiled thus far, sent deputies to the widows of Mohammad and chief men of the City. "We come," they said, "to visit the Prophet's home and resting-place, and to ask that certain of the Governors be deposed. Give us leave to enter." But leave was not granted. Then they despatched each a deputation to their respective candidates. 'Alī stormed at the messengers, and called them rebels accursed of the Prophet; and the others met with no better reception at the hands of Talha and Az-Zubeir. Unable to gain the citizens, without whose consent their object was out of reach, the rebel leaders declared themselves satisfied with the Caliph's promise of reform, and so retired. They made as if each company were taking the road home, but with the concerted plan of returning shortly, when they might find the City less prepared. The citizens, relieved of the immediate danger, cast aside their armour, and for some days things went on as before, 'Othmān leading the prayers. Suddenly, the three bands reappeared. A party headed by 'Alī went forth to ask the reason. The strangers pointed to a document attested by the Caliph's seal; this, they said, had been found by the Egyptian company upon 'Othmān's servant, whom they caught hastening on the road to Fustāt; and it contained orders for the insurgents to be imprisoned, tortured, or put to death. 'Alī, suspecting collusion, asked how the discovery had become so promptly known to the other companies marching in different directions, as to bring them all back at once together? "Speak of it as ye will," they said, "here is the writing, and here the Caliph's seal." 'Alī repaired to 'Othmān, who denied knowledge of the document; but with the view of clearing up the matter, consented to

but return with document bearing Caliph's seal.

receive the rebel leaders. Introduced by 'Alī they made no obeisance, but with defiant attitude recounted their pretended grievances. They had retired with the promise of redress, they said; but instead of redress, here was the Caliph's own servant whom they had caught hastening to Egypt with the treacherous document now produced. 'Othmān swore solemnly that he knew nothing of it. "Then say who it was that wrote and sealed this order." "I know not," said the aged Caliph. "But it was passed off as thine; thy servant carried it; see, here is thy seal, and yet forsooth thou wast not privy to it!" Again 'Othman affirmed that it was even so.[1] "Whether thou speakest truth," they cried in accents loud and rude, "or art a liar, either way, thou art unworthy of the Caliphate. We dare not leave the sceptre in the hands of one who, either knave or fool, is too weak to govern those about him. Resign, for the Lord hath deposed thee!" 'Othmān made answer:—"The garment wherewith the Lord hath girded me I will in no wise put off; but any evil ye complain of, that I am ready to put away from me." It was all too late, they cried; he had often made, and as often broken, the promise to amend; they could no longer trust him; now they would fight until he abdicated, or else was slain. "Death," said 'Othmān, gathering himself up with the firmness and dignity that marked his last days,—"death I prefer; as for fighting, I have said it already, my people shall not fight; had that been my desire, I had summoned legions to my side." The altercation becoming loud and violent, 'Alī arose and departed to his home. The conspirators also retired to their fellows; but they had now

A.H. 35.

Angry altercation with Caliph.

[1] The facts regarding this document are obscure. It certainly was sealed with the Caliph's signet; but who affixed it, and how obtained, cannot be told. Nobody alleges 'Othman's complicity. Most traditions attribute the act to Merwān, the Caliph's unpopular cousin, who, throughout the narrative, receives constant abuse as the author of 'Othmān's troubles; but these are all tinged with 'Abbāsid hatred. 'Alī's accusation against the insurgents is unanswerable. There must have been a preconcerted scheme between the three camps; and there is strong presumption of something unfair as regards the document itself. It is, of course, possible that Merwan may have taken upon himself the issue and despatch of the rescript; and, indeed, there were not wanting grounds for his venturing on such a course. The insurgents may also have got scent of the document, before they started ostensibly with the purpose of returning home. But these are mere surmises.

A.H. 35.

secured what they desired, a footing in the City. They joined in the ranks of worshippers at the daily prayers in the Mosque, cast dust in the face of 'Othmân as he stood up to speak, and thrust aside his loyal helpers. The fatal crisis was hurrying on.

Tumult at time of prayer; 'Othmân struck down.

Upon the Friday following, when the prayers were over, 'Othmân ascended the pulpit. He first appealed to the better sense of the citizens, who, although overawed by the rebels, condemned their lawless attitude. Then turning to the conspirators, he continued—"Ye are aware that the men of Medîna hold you accursed at the mouth of the Prophet, for that ye have risen up against his Caliph and Vicegerent. Wherefore wipe out now your evil deeds by repentance, and by good deeds make atonement for the past." One and another of the Citizens arose earnestly confirming the Caliph's words and pleading his cause; but they were silenced and violently set down. A tumult arose. The men of Medîna were driven from the Mosque by showers of stones. One of these struck 'Othmân, who fell from the pulpit, and was carried to his house adjoining, in a swoon. He soon recovered, and for some days was still able to preside at the daily prayers. At last the insolence and violence of the insurgents forced him to keep to his house, and a virtual blockade ensued. But a bodyguard of armed retainers, supported by loyal citizens, succeeded for a time in keeping the entrance safe.

Attitude of 'Alî, Zubeir, and Ṭalḥa.

From the first day of the tumult, 'Alî, Az-Zubeir, and Ṭalḥa (the three named by the rebels as candidates for the Caliphate) each sent a son to join the loyal and gallant band planted at the palace door. But they did little more; and, in fact, throughout the painful episode, kept themselves altogether in the background. After the uproar and 'Othmân's swoon, they came along with others to inquire how he fared. No sooner did they enter, than Merwân and other kinsmen attending the Caliph cried out against 'Alî as the prime author of the disaster, which would recoil, they said (and said truly), upon his own head. Thereupon 'Alî arose in wrath, and, with the rest, retired home. It was, in truth, a cruel and dastardly desertion, and in the end bore bitter fruit for one and all. Alarm at the defiance of constituted authority and loyalty to the Throne

equally demanded a bold and uncompromising front. The truth was outspoken by one of the Companions at the time. "Ye Koreish," he said, "there hath been till now a strong and fenced door betwixt you and the Arab tribes; wherefore is it that ye now break down the door?" A.H. 35.

'Othmān besieged. Parley with 'Alī, Zubeir, and Ṭalḥa.

So soon as the conspirators had shown their true colours, 'Othmān despatched urgent calls to Syria and Al-Baṣra for help. Mu'āwiya, who had long foreseen the dire necessity, was ready with a strong force, which, as well as a similar column from Al-Baṣra, hurried to their Master's rescue. But the march was long, and the difficulty was for 'Othmān to hold out till they should appear. The insurgents had possession of the Mosque and of the approaches to the Palace; and, in the height of insolence, their leader now took the Caliph's place at prayer. There were no troops at Medīna, and 'Othmān was dependent on the little force which barely sufficed to guard the palace entrance. It was composed besides train-band slaves, of some eighteen near kinsmen, and other citizens, with the sons of 'Alī, Az-Zubeir, and Ṭalḥa. Apprehending, from the growing ferocity of the attack, that the end might not be far off, 'Othmān sent to tell 'Alī, Az-Zubeir, and Ṭalḥa that he wished once more to see them. They came and stood without the palace, but within reach of hearing. The Caliph, from the flat roof of his house, bade them all sit down; and so for the moment friends and foes sat down together. "Fellow citizens!" cried 'Othmān with loud voice, "I have prayed to the Lord for you, that when I am taken, he may set the Caliphate aright." Then he spoke of his previous life, and how the Lord had made choice of him to be Successor of His Prophet and Commander of the Faithful. "And now," said he, "ye have risen up to slay the Lord's elect. Have a care, ye men!" (and here he addressed the besiegers);—"the taking of life is lawful but for three things, apostasy, murder, and adultery. Taking my life without such cause, ye but suspend the sword over your own necks. Sedition and bloodshed shall not depart for ever from your midst." Thus far they gave him audience, and then cried out that there was yet a fourth just cause of death, the quenching of truth by wrong-doing, and of right by violence; and for his ungodliness and tyranny he must abdicate or be slain. For a moment

A.H. 35. 'Othman was silent. Then calmly rising, he bade the citizens go back; and himself, with but faint hope of relief, turned to re-enter his dreary home.

Blockade pressed. Suffering from thirst.

The blockade had lasted several weeks, when a mounted messenger arrived with tidings that succour was on its way. This, coming to the insurgents' knowledge, caused them to redouble their efforts. Closing every approach, they allowed neither outlet nor ingress to a single soul. Water hardly obtainable even by stealth at night, the little garrison suffered the extremities of thirst. On the appeal of 'Othmān, 'Alī expostulated with the besiegers;—"they were treating the Caliph," he told them, "more cruelly than they would prisoners on the field of battle. Even infidels did not deny water to a thirsty enemy." They were deaf to his entreaty. Umm Habība, touched with pity, sought with 'Alī's aid to carry water on her mule through the rebel ranks; but neither sex nor rank, nor having been the Prophet's wife, availed to prevent her being roughly handled. They cut her bridle with their swords, so that she was near falling to the ground, and drove her rudely back. The better part of the inhabitants were shocked at the violence and inhumanity of the rebels; but none had the courage to oppose them. Sick at heart, most kept to their houses; while others, alarmed, and seeking to avoid the cruel spectacle, quitted Medīna. It is hard to believe that, even in the defenceless state of the city, 'Alī, Az-Zubeir, and Ṭalḥa, the great heroes of Islām, could not, if they wished, have raised effective opposition to the lawless work of the heartless regicides. We must hold them culpable, if not of collusion with the insurgents, at least of cold-blooded indifference to their Caliph's fate.[1]

[1] The talk among the courtiers of Al-Ma'mūn, as reflected in the *Apology of Al Kindy*, was that 'Alī, even at a much earlier period, contemplated the putting of 'Othmān to death (*Apology*, p. 73). There seems no proof or even the slightest presumption of this: but anyhow, one cannot but feel indignant at the attitude of 'Alī, who would do so much, and no more: who sent his son to join the Caliph's guard at the palace gate, and was scandalised at water being denied him to drink: and yet would not so much as raise a finger to save his life.

We have also traditions in which 'Othmān is represented as reproaching Ṭalḥa for encouraging the rebels in a more strict enforcement of the blockade: but, whatever his demerits in deserting the Caliph, this seems incredible. The ordinary account is that Ṭalḥa and Az-Zubeir,

The solemnities of yearly Pilgrimage were now at hand, and 'Othmān, still mindful of his obligation as head of Islām to provide for their due observance, once more ascended the palace roof. From thence he called for the son of Al-'Abbas, one of the faithful party guarding the entrance, and bade him assume the leadership of the band of pilgrims who should now proceed to Mecca;—a duty which, much against his will, as taking him from the defence, he undertook. 'Āisha joined the party. She is accused of having formerly stirred up the people against 'Othmān. Now, at anyrate, the impulsive lady shook herself free from the insurgents, and also, in order to detach her brother Mohammad from their company, besought him to accompany her to Mecca. But he refused.

A.H 35. Annual pilgrimage, xii. 35 A.H. June, 656 A.D.

The approach of succour at last quickening the rebels to extremities, they resolved on a final and murderous attack. Violent onset was made from all quarters, and the forlorn band of defenders, unable longer to hold their ground, retired within the palace gate, which they closed and barred, covering their retreat with a discharge of archery, by which one of the rebels was killed. Infuriated at their comrade's death, the insurgents rushed at the gate, battered it with stones, but finding it all too strong, sat down to burn it. Meanwhile others, swarming in crowds from the roof of an adjoining building, gained easier access, and, rushing along the corridor, attacked the guard still congregated within the palace gate. One of these was slain, Merwan was left half dead, and the rest were overpowered. 'Othmān had retired alone into an inner chamber of the women's apartments; and there awaiting his fate, read from the Ḳor'an spread open on his knees. Three ruffians sent to fulfil the bloody work, rushed in upon him thus engaged. Awed by his calm demeanour and plaintive appeal, each returned as he went. "It would be murder," they said, "to lay hands upon him thus."

The palace stormed, 18 Dhu'l-Hijja, June 17,

on hearing of the rebel excesses, kept to their houses; others, again, say that they both quitted Medīna.

Um Ḥabība, as daughter of Abu Sufyān, naturally sympathised with 'Othmān. A citizen of Al-Kūfa, who had accompanied the insurgents, was so indignant at their treatment of one of "the Mothers of the Faithful," that he went off to his home, and there gave vent to his feelings in verses expressive of his horror at the scenes enacting at Medina.

A.H. 3.

Mohammad son of Abu Bekr, in his hate and rage had no such scruples. Running in, he seized him by the beard, and cried, "The Lord abase thee, thou old dotard!" "Let my beard go," said 'Othmān, calmly; "I am no dotard, but the Caliph, whom they call 'Othmān." Then, in answer to a further torrent of abuse, the aged man went on:- "Son of my brother! Thy father would not have served me so. The Lord help me! To him I flee for refuge from thee." The appeal touched even the unworthy son of Abu Bekr, and he too retired. The insurgent leaders, now impatient, crowded in, smote the Caliph with their swords, and trampled on the Kor'an which he had been reading. He yet had strength enough to gather up the leaves and press them to his bosom, while the blood flowed forth upon the sacred text.[1] Thus attacked, the faithful Na'ila cast herself upon her wounded lord, and as she shielded him with her arm, a sword-cut severed several of her fingers, which fell upon the ground. The band of slaves attempted his defence. One of them slew the leader, but was immediately himself cut down. Further effort was in vain. The insurgents plunged their weapons into the Caliph's body, and he fell lifeless to the ground. The infuriated mob now had their way. A scene of riot followed. They stabbed the corpse, leaped savagely on it, and were proceeding to cut off the head, when the women screamed, beating their breasts and faces, and the savage crew desisted. The palace was gutted; and even Na'ila, all wounded and bloody, was stripped of her veil. Just then the cry was raised, "To the Treasury!" and suddenly all departed.

and 'Othmān slain.

[1] The blood, we are told, flowed down to the words:—"If they turn their backs, they are only schismatics; thy Lord will deal with them for you" (Sura ii. v. 131). The appropriateness of the text, however, may of itself have suggested the story.

When the insurgents first rushed in, he was reading the passage in Sura iii. 167, which refers to Medina being attacked at the battle of Ohod. The disaffected citizens are there represented as taunting Mohammad and his followers in these words:—"*Verily, the men [of Mecca] have gathered forces against you; wherefore, be afraid of the same. But it only increased their faith, and they said:—The Lord sufficeth for us; He is the best Protector.*" This was a favourite text of 'Othmān's, and he may perhaps have turned to it for comfort now that vain was the help of man.

As soon as they had left, the palace gate was barred, and thus for three days and nights the three dead bodies lay in silence solemnly within. Then some chief men of Koreish obtained leave of 'Ali to bury the Caliph's body. In the dusk of evening, the funeral procession wended its way to the burying-ground outside the city. Death had not softened the rebels' hearts, and they pelted the bier with stones. Not in the graveyard, but in a field adjoining, the body, with hurried service, was committed to the dust. In after years the field was added by Merwân to the main burying-ground,—a spot consecrated by the remains of the early heroes of the Prophet's wars. And there the Umeiyads long buried their dead around the grave of their murdered kinsman. A.H. 35. His burial.

Thus, at the age of eighty-two, died 'Othmân, after a reign of twelve years. The misfortunes amidst which he sank bring out so sharply the failings of his character that further delineation is hardly needed. Narrow, irresolute, and weak, he had yet a kindly nature which might have made him, in less troublous times, a favourite of the people. Such, indeed, for a season he was at the beginning of his Caliphate. But afterwards he fell on evil days. The struggle between Koreish and the rest of the Arabs was hurrying on the nation to an internecine war. The only possible safety was for the class still dominant to have opposed a strong and united front. By his vacillation, selfishness, and nepotism, 'Othmân broke up into embittered factions the aristocracy of Islâm, and threw the last chance away. Character.

The columns hastening from the north for 'Othmân's relief, hearing on their way the tragic end, returned to their respective homes. Columns return to the north.

CHAPTER XXXIII

ELECTION OF 'ALÍ

35-36 A.H. 656 A.D.

Revulsion of feeling.

ON the Caliph's death, his kinsfolk, and such as had helped in his defence, retired from the scene. The City was horror-struck. They had hardly anticipated the tragic end. Many who had favoured or even joined the rebels started back now the deed was done. The relatives of the murdered Caliph fled to Mecca with vows of vengeance. A citizen of Medina, wrapping carefully the severed fingers of Nā'ila in the blood-stained shirt of 'Othmān, meet symbols of revenge, carried them off to Damascus, and laid them at Mu'āwiya's feet.

'Alí elected Caliph, 24 xii. 35 June 23, 656.

For several days anarchy reigned in Medina. The regicides had mastery of the city. The Egyptians were foremost amongst these in the first days of terror: and prayer was conducted in the Mosque by their leader. Of the inhabitants few ventured out. At last on the fifth day the rebels insisted that, before they quitted Medina, the citizens should elect a Caliph, and restore the empire to its normal state. Shrinking, no doubt, from the task which 'Othmān's successor would have to face, 'Alí held back, and offered to swear allegiance to either Ṭalha or Az-Zubeir. But in the end, pressed by the threats of the regicides and entreaties of his friends, he yielded; and so, six days after the fatal tragedy, 'Alí took the oath to rule "according to the Book of the Lord," and was saluted Caliph. Az-Zubeir and Ṭalha were themselves the first to acknowledge him. They asserted afterwards that they swore unwillingly, through fear of the conspirators. The mass of the people followed. There were exceptions; but 'Alí was lenient, and

would not press the adherents of the late Caliph to swear allegiance. The insurgents, having themselves done homage, departed to tell the tale at Al-Kufa, Al-Baṣra, and Fusṭāṭ. A.H. 35-36.

Declines to punish regicides.

No bed of roses was strewn for 'Alī. Whether at home or abroad, work rough and anxious was before him. To the standing contention between the Bedawīn and Ḳoreish was now added the cry of vengeance on the regicides. Red-handed treason had loosened the bonds of society, and constituted authority was set at nought. Bands of Bedawīn, scenting plunder from afar, hung about the City. Encouraged by the servile population now broken loose, they refused to depart.[1] 'Alī was pressed to vindicate the majesty of law, and punish the men who had stained their hands with the blood of 'Othmān. Even Ṭalḥa and Az-Zubeir, awakening too late to the portentous nature of the crime enacted, with little check from them, and before their very eyes, urged this. "My brothers," replied 'Alī, "I am not indifferent to what ye say, but helpless. The wild Bedawīn and rampant slaves will have their way. What is this but an outburst of paganism long suppressed;—a return, for the moment, to the days of Ignorance, a work of Satan? Just now they are beyond our power. Wait; and the Lord will guide us." This waiting, hesitating mood was the bane of 'Alī's life. He was over fifty years of age, and, though vigorous in his earlier years, had become corpulent and inactive now. He loved ease; and while sometimes obstinate and self-willed, his ordinary maxim was that things left to themselves would surely mend.

Koreish alarmed.

Ḳoreish were anxious and alarmed. The revolt, ostensibly against 'Othmān's ungodly rule, was taking now far

[1] A servile population, captives of war, had been pouring for years into Medīna as into other centres. They were employed as domestics, warders, bodyguards, or followed trades, paying profits to their masters. On the outbreak they broke away into defiant attitude. This would occur the more readily at Medīna, as they formed the guards of the Treasury and mansions of the great men; and, being the only trained force there, they felt their power. We find them similarly taking part in the outbreaks at Al-Baṣra and elsewhere. Like the Janissaries or Memlūks of later days, they were a petulant brood. Immediately on homage being done to 'Alī, they lampooned him in minatory verses, to which 'Alī (not to be outdone in the poetry even of slaves) replied in extempore couplets. Proclamation was made that slaves not returning to their masters would be treated as outlaws; but it had no effect.

A.H. 35-36. wider range. The Bedawin were impatient of Koreishite control; and that which had happened to the Umeiyad family, now forced to flee Medina, might any moment happen to themselves. Yet 'Ali, though he denounced the work of the regicides as high treason, took no steps to punish it, but temporised. Prompt and vigorous pursuit would no doubt have been joined in, heart and soul, by all the leaders and better classes of Islam. He chose rather to let the vessel drift, as it shortly did, into the vortex of rebellion.

'Alī would depose Mu'āwiya in Syria,

The confirmation, or supersession, of the provincial governors was another pressing matter; and here 'Ali, turning a deaf ear to his friends, proved wilful and precipitate. When Ibn al-'Abbas returned from the pilgrimage at Mecca, he found Al-Moghira wisely urging 'Ali to retain the governors generally in their posts, at least till the Empire at large had recognised his succession to the throne. But 'Ali refused. Ibn al-'Abbas now pressed the same view: "At anyrate," he said, "retain Mu'awiya; it was 'Omar, not 'Othman, who placed him there; and all Syria followeth after him." The advice, coming from so near a kinsman, deserved consideration. But 'Ali, with family hatred against the Umeiyad line, answered sharply, "Nay; I will not confirm him even for a single day." "If thou depose him," reasoned his friend, "the Syrians will question thine election: and, still worse, accusing thee of the blood of 'Othman, rise up as one man against thee. Confirm him in the government of Syria, and they care not who is Caliph. When thou art firmly seated, depose him if thou wilt. It will be easy then." "Never," answered 'Ali; "he shall have nought but the sword from me." "Thou art brave," Ibn al-'Abbas replied, "but innocent of the craft of war; and hath not the Prophet himself said, *What is war but a game of deception?*" "That is true," responded 'Ali, "but I will have none of Mu'awiya." "Then," said Ibn al-'Abbas, "thou hadst better depart to thy property at Yenbo', and close the gates of thy stronghold there behind thee; for everywhere the Bedawin are hounding along; and if thou makest others thine enemies, these will surely find thee out, and lay the blood of 'Othman at thy door." "Come," said 'Ali, trying another line, "thou shalt go forth thyself to Syria. See, now, I have appointed thee." "That," replied Ibn al-'Abbas, "can

never be. Mu'āwiya would surely behead me or cast me into prison because of 'Othmān's death, and my being kin to thee. Hearken, and make terms with him ere it be too late." But 'Alī turned a deaf ear. A.H. 35-36.

and appoint new governors throughout the Empire, i. 36 A.H. July, 656.

Acting on this wayward impulse, 'Alī sent men of his own to replace existing governors throughout the Empire. In most places these met with but a sorry reception. At Al-Baṣra, indeed, Ibn 'Āmir, unwilling to provoke hostilities, retired to Mecca, and his successor, 'Othmān ibn Ḥoneif, entered unopposed; but the faction which clung to the memory of the late Caliph was as strong there as that which favoured 'Alī, while a third party waited the out-turn of events at Medīna. In Egypt it was much the same. Ḳeis, appointed to the command, was a wise and able ruler; but he only succeeded in crossing the frontier by feigning attachment to the cause of 'Othmān; while a strong and aggressive faction throughout the country, swore that they would not submit until the regicides were brought to justice. In the Yemen, the new Governor obtained possession, but only after his predecessor had carried off to Mecca all the treasure. The two officers nominated to Al-Kūfa and Syria met with so rough a reception, that they were glad to escape with their lives back to Medīna.

Sends letters to Mu'āwiya and Abu Mūsa.

Dispirited by these events, 'Alī took counsel with Ṭalḥa and Az-Zubeir. The sedition he had apprehended was already kindled, and would spread like wild-fire, catching whatever might come in its way. "Then," replied they, "let us depart, that we may do thee service in the field." "Wait," answered 'Alī; "the cautery must be the last resort." So he resolved in the first instance to address letters to Mu'āwiya, and also to Abu Mūsa at Al-Kūfa, demanding their allegiance. Abu Mūsa replied in loyal terms, but withal, bade the Caliph beware of the disaffection which in Al-Kufa was rife around him. With Syria, communication was utterly cut off; weeks elapsed, and there was no reply. In truth, a strange scene meanwhile was being enacted there.

Emblems of vengeance hung up at Damascus.

Mu'āwiya had no sooner received the emblems of 'Othmān's murder, — the gory shirt and Na'ila's mangled fingers,—than he hung them on the pulpit of the Damascus mosque. There suspended, they remained a spectacle

A.H. 35-36.

maddening the Syrians to bloody revenge. Still he took no immediate action. Biding his time, he waited to see what the new Caliph might do. Had 'Ali been wise, he would have used the angry Syrians to take vengeance on the regicides, and in so doing crush as well the rising rebellion of the Arab tribes. In this work they would have been his strongest help; for Syria never suffered from the Bedawi turbulence which kept Al-'Irak and Egypt in continual turmoil. It had been the early and favourite field of Koreish, who, settling there more largely than elsewhere, found their influence, in consequence, all the better recognised. Moreover, they inhabited the Syrian cities in common with the Christian population, which had surrendered for the most part on favourable terms. Society was thus throughout all classes orderly and loyal; whereas Al-Basra and Al-Kufa were filled with restless headstrong Arab tribes which held the conquered lands to be their own especial patrimony. Law prevailed in Syria; in Al-'Irak and Egypt petulance and pride of arms. Syria was, moreover, attached to the Umeiyad stock, and so remained faithful to the end.

Mu'āwiya sends defiant answer, ii. 36 A.H. August, 656 A.D.

The Syrians had not long to wait the outcome of 'Ali's plans. His abortive attempt to supersede Mu'awiya, and refusal to arraign the regicides, gave colour to the charge of collusion with them; and having the bloody shirt ever before their eyes, the Syrians soon raised the cry against the Caliph. The majesty of outraged law must now be vindicated; and if the assassins were not pursued to justice, who but 'Ali was to blame? Damascus was in this excited temper when 'Ali's letter reached Mu'awiya. At the first no answer was vouchsafed. The envoy kept in waiting witnessed day by day the gathering storm. At last Mu'awiya sent a despatch,—stranger than ever had been seen before. The cover was superscribed with this address; *From Mu'awiya to 'Ali*, and bore the seal of State. There was no other word, all was blank within. The despatch was carried by Kabisa, a Bedawi chief, and with him the Caliph's envoy was given permission to depart. Arriving at Medina three months after 'Othman's death, Kabisa presented the letter to 'Ali, who broke the seal impatiently. "What meaneth this?" he cried, starting at the blank despatch;—"let the enigma be explained."

Ḳabiṣa first inquired whether his life was safe. "Safe," answered 'Alī; "the person of an Ambassador is sacred. Speak on." "Know, then," proceeded Mu'āwiya's envoy, "that but now I left behind me, weeping under the blood-stained shirt of 'Othmān, sixty thousand warriors, bent on revenging the Caliph's death,—and revenging it on thee!" "What!" exclaimed 'Alī, aghast, "*On me!* Seest thou not that I am powerless to pursue the murderers? O Lord! I take Thee to witness that I am guiltless of 'Othmān's blood. Begone! See, thy life is safe." As the envoy withdrew, the petulant slaves and rabble shouted after him, "Slay the dog; slay the envoy of Syrian dogs!" He turned, and, apostrophising Ḳoreish, cried at the pitch of his voice, "Children of Moḍar! Children of Ḳeis! The horse and the bow! Four thousand picked warriors close at hand. See to your camels and your steeds!" A.H. 35-36.

'Alī proclaims campaign against Mu'āwiya.

Medina was roused and startled by the envoy's cry. The time was come when 'Alī could no longer put his decision off. Al-Ḥasan, his elder son, ever poor in spirit, counselled waiting; but 'Alī saw too plainly the hour for action to be now or never. He gave vent to his troubled soul in martial lines, which, soon in everyone's mouth, told the people his resolve to make the sword the arbiter betwixt Mu'awiya and himself. An expedition against Syria was proclaimed; captains were appointed to command the various companies of the expected levies, and banners were presented to them by 'Alī; but he was careful to name no one who had taken part in the attack on 'Othmān. Orders were also sent to Al-Kūfa, Al-Baṣra, and Egypt, to raise troops for the war. This done, 'Alī mounted the pulpit and harangued the citizens. If they failed to fight now, he told them, the power would pass away from them, never more to be regained. "Fight, then, against the cursed schismatics, who would destroy the unity of Islam and rend in twain the body of the Faithful. Haply the Lord will set that right which the Nations are setting wrong." But the people did not respond to the appeal, and the ranks were slow of filling.

Talḥa and Az-Zubeir depart to Mecca.

Talḥa and Az-Zubeir, when they saw affairs thus drifting, again asked leave to quit Medina; and so they now set out for Mecca, on pretext of performing the lesser Pilgrimage.

CHAPTER XXXIV

REBELLION AT AL-BAṢRA

36 A.H. 656 A.D.

'Aisha retires to Mecca,

BUT, before crossing arms with Mu'awiya, heavy work was in store for 'Ali.

Returning from Mecca, 'Âisha was met on her way to Medina by the tidings of 'Othman's death and 'Ali's accession to the Caliphate. "Carry me back," cried the incensed and impetuous lady, "carry me back to Mecca. They have murdered the Caliph. I will avenge his blood."

and there stirs up sedition.

In the early period of 'Othman's troubles, 'Âisha, like others, had contributed her share towards fomenting public discontent. But she was no party to the cruel attack of the conspirators, and had, in fact, sought to detach her brother from them by inviting him to accompany her to Mecca. Vain and factious, she had never forgiven the unhandsome conduct of 'Ali on the occasion when her virtue had been doubted by the Prophet;[1] and now she would gladly have seen Az-Zubeir succeed instead. In place, therefore, of continuing her journey home, she turned and went straightway back again to Mecca. There the disaffected gathered round her, while from her veiled retreat she plotted the revenge of 'Othman's blood, and with shrill voice harangued her audience on the enormous crime that had desecrated the Prophet's home and resting-place.

Thus when Az-Zubeir and Ṭalha reached Mecca, they found sedition already well advanced. The numerous adherents of the Umeiyad house, who had fled thither on the Caliph's death, or still were resident at Mecca, and

[1] *Life of Moḥammad*, p. 301 *et seq.*

the factious and servile mass at large, listened eagerly to their tale. "They had left the men of Medīna," said Ṭalha and Az-Zubeir, "plunged in perplexity. Right had been confounded so with wrong that people knew not which way to turn. It was for Mecca now to lead, and punish traitors who had slain their Caliph." The standard of rebellion thus raised, many flocked around it. Al-Baṣra was to be the first object of attack, a city favouring the claims of Ṭalha; while Ibn 'Āmir, the late governor and friend of 'Othmān, had still an influential following there. The treasure he had brought away, as well as that carried off by Al-'Alā from the Yemen, was now expended in equipping the force and providing it with carriage. 'Āisha, spurning the restraints of sex, prepared to join the campaign and stir up the men of Al-Baṣra, as she had stirred up those of Mecca. Ḥafṣa was with difficulty restrained by her brother 'Abdallah son of 'Omar (who had just fled from Medīna, and held aloof from either side) from following her sister-widow. At length, some four months after 'Othmān's death, the rebel army set out 3000 strong, of whom 1000 were men of Mecca and Medina. 'Āisha travelled in her litter on a camel, destined to give its name to the first engagement in the civil war. The other widows of Moḥammad residing at Mecca accompanied her a little way, and then returned. As they parted, the company gave vent to their feelings and wept bitterly at the louring outlook;—"there was no such weeping, before or after, as then; so that day was called *The Day of Tears*."

A.H. 36.

Zubeir and Ṭalha with 'Āisha march on Baṣra, iv. 36 A.H. Oct., 656 A.D.

Questions began to arise whether Ṭalha or Az-Zubeir would in event of victory be the Caliph; but 'Āisha, staying the strife, as premature, desired that 'Abdallah son of Az-Zubeir should lead the prayers; and it was given out that the choice of the future Caliph would be left, as heretofore, to the men of Medina. Sa'id, ex-governor of Al-Kufa, distrusting the motives of the leaders, turned aside at the last moment, and with his company went back to Mecca. As the remaining cavalcade swept by him, shouting that they were on their way to destroy the murderers of 'Othmān, Sa'id cried out, "Whither away? the objects of your vengeance (meaning Ṭalha and Az-Zubeir) are on their camels' humps before your eyes. Slay them both, and

Ambition mingled with cry for revenge.

A.H. 36.

return them to your homes!" It is not improbable that with both of these, and their followers also, ambition was mistaken for desire of just revenge. In the whirl of passion, party-cry too often takes the place of reason; and we need not doubt that both leaders and followers had wrought themselves into the belief that punishment of the high treason enacted at Medīna was their real object.

'Āisha's qualm of conscience.

Notwithstanding all this parade of justice, the conscience of 'Āisha was ill at ease. As they journeyed through the desert, her camel-driver beguiled the tedium of the night by calling out the names of the hills and valleys through which they passed. Approaching a Bedawī settlement, the dogs began to howl;—*The Valley of Al-Hau'ab!* cried the guide, noting their progress. 'Āisha started and screamed. Something dreadful which Mohammad had spoken about the barking of the dogs of Al-Hau'ab, flashed across her memory. "Carry me back," she cried; and, making her camel kneel, she hastily alighted from her litter. "Alas and alas!" she continued, "for I heard the Prophet say, reproaching us, as he sat surrounded by his wives one day: '*O that I knew which amongst you it is at whom the dogs of Al-Hau'ab will bark!*' It is me! it is me! the wretched woman of Al-Hau'ab. I will not take another step on this ill-omened expedition." They sought to persuade her that the guide had mistaken the name; but she refused to stir, and the army halted for a whole day. In despair, they bethought them of a stratagem. The following night, they raised the cry that 'Alī was upon them. The greater terror prevailing, 'Āisha hastened to her camel and resumed the march.

'Alī fails to intercept the rebels.

The alarm, feigned for the purpose, was not altogether groundless. When rumours of the defection first reached Medīna, 'Alī refused to move against the malcontents so long as no overt act of rebellion threatened the unity of Islām. But shortly after, news arrived of the design on Al-Basra. At the first, 'Alī was disposed to congratulate himself that the conspirators had not made Al-Kufa, with its greater Bedawī population, their object. Ibn al-'Abbās, however, pointed out that Al-Basra was really the more dangerous, because fewer of the leading chiefs were there, able to curb the people and repress rebellion. 'Alī

admitted this; and, now thoroughly alarmed, gave orders that the column destined for Syria should march instead to Nejd, hoping thereby to intercept the rebels on their way to Al-Baṣra. But the people still hung back. At last a column of 900 men was got together, at the head of which 'Ali himself marched hastily in pursuit of the insurgents; but on striking the Mecca road he found that they had already passed. Not being equipped for further advance, he halted there. Messengers were sent to Al-Kūfa, Egypt, and elsewhere, demanding reinforcements; and for these the Caliph waited before he ventured forward. A.H. 36.

'Āisha, Talha, and Zubeir attack Baṣra.

To return to 'Āisha. The insurgent army, having resumed its march, reached Al-Baṣra, and encamped close by. Messages were exchanged, and Ibn Ḥoneif, the governor, aware that the cry of vengeance on the regicides really covered designs against his master 'Alī, called an assembly, to try the temper of the people. Finding from the uproar that the strangers had a strong party in the City, he put on his armour, and, followed by the larger portion of the citizens, went forth to meet the enemy, who, on their side, were joined from the town by all the malcontents. A parley ensued. Ṭalha, the favourite at Al-Baṣra, Az-Zubeir, and even 'Āisha with shrill voice, all three declaimed against the murderers of 'Othmān, and demanded justice. The other side were equally loud in their protestations against 'Āisha and her attack upon their City. It was a shame, they said, and a slight on the memory of the Prophet for her to forego the sanctity of the Veil, and the proprieties of "Mother of the Faithful." 'Ali had been duly elected and saluted Caliph; and now Ṭalha and Az-Zubeir were treacherously violating the allegiance which they had been the first to swear. These, again, both protested that the oath had been forced upon them. On this point the controversy turned; and from words they fell to blows. Night interposed; but fighting was resumed the following day, and with so serious a loss to the loyalists that a truce was called, and agreement come to, on the understanding that the facts should be ascertained from Medina. If force had really been put upon Az-Zubeir and Ṭalha to take the oath, then Ibn Ḥoneif would retire and leave the City in their hands.

A.H. 36.

Reference to Medina on question of compulsion.

An envoy accredited by either side was accordingly deputed to Medina. He arrived there while 'Alī was absent in his camp, and forthwith proclaimed his mission before the assembled City. The people at first were silent. At last, one declared that both Talha and Az-Zubeir had done homage under compulsion, whereupon a great tumult arose; and the envoy, having seen and heard enough to prove diversity of view, at once took leave.

Basra seized by Talha and Zubeir, 24 iv. 36 A.H. Oct. 19, 656 A.D.

When tidings of these things reached 'Alī, who was with his army in Nejd, he addressed a letter to Ibn Honeif, his governor. "There was no compulsion," he wrote, "on either Talha or Az-Zubeir; neither of these my adversaries was constrained otherwise than by the will of the majority. By the Lord! if their object be to make me abdicate, they are without excuse; if it be any other thing, I am ready to consider it." So when the envoy returned from Medina, and when upon his report the insurgents called on Ibn Honeif to evacuate the City according to agreement, he produced the Caliph's letter and refused. But the rebels had already obtained a footing within the City. Arming themselves, they repaired to the Mosque for evening service, and, the night being dark and stormy, were not perceived until they had overpowered the bodyguard, entered the adjoining palace, and made Ibn Honeif a prisoner. On the following day, a severe conflict raged throughout the City, which ended in the discomfiture of 'Alī's party, and so the government passed into the hands of Talha and Az-Zubeir. True to their ostensible object, these now made proclamation that every citizen who had engaged in the attack on 'Othmān should be brought forth and executed. The order was carried rigorously out, and great numbers were put to death. The life of Ibn Honeif was spared. Set at liberty, his head and beard were shaven, and his eyelashes and moustaches clipped; and in this sorry plight the ousted governor made the best of his way back to 'Alī.

'Āisha seeks reinforcements.

The insurgents communicated tidings of their success to Syria. 'Āisha also wrote letters to Al-Kufa, Medina, and the Yemen, dissuading the people from their allegiance to 'Alī, and stirring them up to avenge the death of 'Othmān.

Meanwhile the citizens of Al-Basra swore allegiance

to Ṭalḥa and Az-Zubeir conjointly. To avoid appearance of rivalry, prayers were conducted alternately by a son of each. Little active sympathy was evoked by the usurpers. Ṭalḥa proclaimed an expedition against 'Alī. But no one responded to the call, and his spirits fell. Thus some weeks passed uneasily, till the City was aroused by the announcement that 'Alī with an army was in full march upon it. A.H. 36.

CHAPTER XXXV

BATTLE OF THE CAMEL

36 A.H. 656 A.D.

'Alī, with help from Kūfa, advances on Baṣra, vi. 36 A.H. Dec., 656 A.D.

FINDING that the insurgent troops, with 'Âisha, Az-Zubeir, and Ṭalha had already passed, 'Alī, as we have seen, halted for a while on the road to Al-Baṣra, with the view of strengthening his army; for, although joined on his march by certain loyal tribes, he still felt too weak for immediate action. To Al-Kufa he addressed a special summons, inhabited as it was by many veterans on whose loyalty he might reasonably depend; and he added force to the call by promising that Al-Kufa should be his seat of government. "See," he wrote, "have not I chosen your city before all other cities for my own? Unto you do I look for succour, if haply peace and unity should again prevail as it behoveth, among brethren in the faith." But the summons was at the first unheeded. The overgrown City was made up of many factions; and from some of these the message of 'Âisha, demanding revenge for 'Othman's blood, had already found response. Abu Musa, its governor, was unequal to the emergency. Loyal to the memory of the murdered Caliph, he yet sought to allay the ferment by a neutral course, and urged the citizens to join neither party, but remain at home. A second deputation meeting with no better success, 'Alī bethought him of sending his elder son Al-Ḥasan, in company with 'Ammar, the former governor of Al-Kufa, to urge his cause. The appeal of Al-Ḥasan, grandson of the Prophet had at last the desired effect. The chord of loyalty in the fickle city's heart was touched; a tumult arose, and Abu Musa, unable to maintain his weak neutrality, was deposed. The Arab tribes rallied, and for the moment heartily, around

the loyalists. Soon 10,000 men, partly by land, partly by river, set out to join the Caliph, who, advancing slowly, awaited their arrival. Thus reinforced, 'Alī was able at last to take the field effectively, and march on the rebellious city. A.H. 36.

'Alī's negotiations with Talha and Zubeir.

Al-Baṣra itself was not wholly hostile, and numbers of the citizens came out to join the camp of 'Alī. The insurgent army, which still nearly equalled that of the Caliph, now marched forth with Ṭalḥa and Az-Zubeir at their head, and 'Āisha herself seated in a well-fenced litter. But 'Alī's thoughts were for peace if possible. He was a man of compromise; and here he was ready, in the interests of Islam, magnanimously to forget the insult offered him. Apart, indeed, from personal jealousies, there was no disagreement sufficient to bar the hope of reconciliation. The cry of Ṭalḥa and Az-Zubeir was for vengeance against the murderers of 'Othmān; and against these, 'Alī as yet did not deny that justice should be dealt. But he was obliged to temporise. He had in his army great numbers of the very men who had risen against 'Othmān; and he felt that to inflict punishment on them, as his adversaries required, would for the present be impossible. Holding these views, he halted, still some little way from Al-Baṣra, and sent forward Al-Ḳa'ḳā' (who with other leaders of renown had joined him from Al-Kūfa) to expostulate with Ṭalḥa and Az-Zubeir. "Ye have slain 600 men of Al-Baṣra," said Al-Ḳa'ḳā' to them, "for the blood of 'Othmān; and lo! to avenge *their* blood, 6000 more have started up. Where is this internecine war to stop? It is peace and repose that Islam needeth now. Give that, and again the majesty of law shall be set up, and the guilty brought to justice." As he spoke, the truth flashed on the minds of Az-Zubeir and Ṭalḥa, and even of 'Āisha; and they returned word that if these really were the sentiments of 'Alī, they were ready to submit. After several days spent in such negotiations, 'Alī, glad at the prospect of a bloodless compromise, advanced.

Tactics of the regicides.

But, as we have seen, 'Alī's army, recruited at random from the Bedawī settlements, comprised a great number of notorious regicides. Afraid of bringing these into contact with the heated army of his opponents, still breathing out fire and slaughter against them, 'Alī gave command that none who had shared in the attack on 'Othman should for

A.H. 36. the present accompany him in his advance. These in their turn, with Al-Ashtar at their head, became alarmed. Talha's troops, sworn to their destruction, were double their number; if peace were patched up, no hope remained. Reasoning thus, they held a secret conclave, and came to the conclusion that their only safety lay in precipitating hostilities, and thus forcing 'Ali's hand to crush their enemies. Accordingly they remained behind, but with the resolve that at the right moment they would advance and throw themselves upon the enemy.

Negotiations for a compromise.

The army of Al-Basra, numbering some 20,000 men, remained encamped on the outskirts of the city. 'Ali's force, advancing unopposed, halted within sight; and negotiations for peace went on, evidently substantial and sincere. 'Ali himself approached on horseback, and Talha with Az-Zubeir rode forth to confer with him. "Wherefore have ye risen against me," said 'Ali; "did ye not swear homage to me?" "Yea," replied Talha "but with the sword over our necks; and now our demand is that justice be executed against the murderers of 'Othman." 'Ali replied that he no less than they held the regicides to be guilty; he even cursed them in no measured terms, but added that for their punishment they must bide their time. Az-Zubeir on his side was softened by certain words of the Prophet towards him which 'Ali recalled to his mind, and bound himself by an oath that he would not fight. Then they all retired. Both armies, understanding that negotiations were in progress, went to rest that night in security such as they had not felt for many weeks.

Regicides precipitate hostilities.

But anon the spell was rudely broken. Towards morning, a sudden shock changed the scene. The regicides, during the night, carried their design into execution. Led by them, squadrons of Bedawi lances bore down, while yet dark, upon the Al-Basra tents. In a moment all was confusion. Each camp believed that it had been attacked by the other; and the dawn found both armies drawn up, as the conspirators desired, in mortal combat against each other. In vain 'Ali endeavoured to hold back his men. The sense of treachery embittered the conflict. It was a strange engagement,—the first in which Muslims had crossed swords with Muslims. It resembled a battle of the old Arab times, only that for tribal

rivalry were now substituted other passions. Clans were broken up, and it became in some measure a contest between the two rival cities; "The Beni Ar-Rabi'a of Al-Kūfa fought against the Beni Ar-Rabi'a of Al-Baṣra, the Beni Moḍar of the one against the Beni Moḍar of the other;" and so on, with the various tribes, and even with families, one part arrayed against the other. The Al-Kūfa ranks were urged on by the regicides, who felt that, unless 'Alī conquered, they were all doomed men. The fierceness and obstinacy of the battle can be only thus accounted for. One of the combatants tells us that "when the opposing sides came together breast to breast, with a furious shock, the noise was like that of washermen at the riverside."[1] The attitude of the leaders was in marked contrast with the bitter struggle of the ranks. Az-Zubeir, half-hearted since his interview with 'Alī, left the battlefield according to his promise, and was killed in an adjoining valley. Ṭalḥa, disabled by an arrow in the leg, was carried into Al-Baṣra, where he died. Bereft of their leaders, the insurgent troops gave way. They were falling back upon the city, when they passed by the camel of 'Āisha. Attacked fiercely all around, she from within her litter kept crying out with fruitless energy,—"Slay the murderers of 'Othmān." The word ran through the retiring ranks, that "the Mother of the Faithful was in peril," and they gallantly stayed their flight to rescue her. Long and cruelly the conflict raged around the fated camel. One after another brave warriors rushed to seize her standard; one after another they were cut down. Of Ḳoreish seventy perished by the bridle. At last, 'Alī, perceiving that her camel was the rallying-point of the enemy, sent one of his captains to hamstring, and thus disable it. With a loud cry the animal fell to the ground. The struggle ceased and the insurgents retired into the city. The litter, bristling with arrows like a hedgehog, was taken down, and, by desire of 'Alī, placed in a retired spot, where 'Āisha's brother Moḥammad pitched a tent for her. As he drew aside the curtain, she screamed at the unknown intrusion;—"Are thine own people, then," he said, "become strange unto thee?" "It is my brother!" she exclaimed, and suffered herself to be led into the tent. The brave but wayward lady had escaped without a wound.

A.H. 36.

Zubeir and Ṭalḥa killed.

[1] The metaphor will be appreciated by the Eastern traveller.

A.H. 36.

Losses in the Battle of the Camel.

The carnage in the ill-starred *Battle of the Camel* (for so it came to be called) was very great. The field was covered with 10,000 bodies in equal proportion on either side; and this, notwithstanding that the victory was not followed up. For 'Alī had given orders that no fugitive should be pursued, nor any wounded soldier slain, nor plunder seized, nor the privacy of any house invaded. A great trench was dug, and into it the dead were lowered, friends and foes alike. 'Alī, encamped for three days without the city, himself performed the funeral service. It was a new experience to bury the dead slain in battle not against the infidel, but believer fighting against believer. Instead of cursing the memory of his enemies (too soon the fashion in these civil wars), 'Alī spoke hopefully of the future state of such as had entered the field, on whatever side, with an honest heart. When they brought him the sword of Az-Zubeir, he cursed the man who took his life; and, calling to mind the feats displayed by the brave man that wielded it in the early battles of Islam, exclaimed:—"Many a time hath this sword driven care and sorrow from the Prophet's brow." The Muslims might well mourn the memory both of Talha and Az-Zubeir, remembering how on the field of Ohod the former had saved the life of Mohammad at the peril of his own, and how often the latter had carried confusion into the ranks of the idolaters of Mecca. Their fall, and that of many of the Companions, was a loss to the Empire itself, because seriously weakening Koreish in the struggle yet to be fought out betwixt them and the Arab tribes. In fact, this victory of 'Alī was virtually the victory of the regicides, supported by the factious citizens of Al-Kufa. Thenceforward 'Alī was wholly dependent upon them. If, instead, he had effected a compromise with Talha and Az-Zubeir, his position would have been incomparably stronger.

'Alī's magnanimity towards the enemy.

The bearing of 'Alī was generous towards his fallen foe. Having entered the city, he divided the contents of the treasury amongst the troops which had fought on his side, promising them a still larger reward "when the Lord should have delivered Syria into his hands." But otherwise he treated friends and foes alike, and buried in oblivion animosities of the past. Merwan and the adherents of the house of Umeiya fled to their homes, or else found refuge

in Syria. All that remained in the city swore fealty to 'Alī. The only class dissatisfied was that of the slaves and rabble, who murmured at having no share in the treasure, nor any chance of plunder. These, gathering into marauding bands, occasioned much disquietude to the Caliph, and hastened his departure from the city, with the view of checking the mischief they were bent on. A.H. 36.

'Āisha retires to Medīna.

'Āisha was treated by 'Alī with the reverence due to one who bore the title of "the Prophet's Spouse in this life and also in the life to come." She was now five-and-forty years of age, but had lost little of the fire and vivacity of youth. After the battle, the Caliph visited her tent, and expressed his satisfaction at finding her unhurt; adding mildly, but half reproachfully:—"The Lord pardon thee for what hath passed, and have mercy upon thee." "And upon thee also!" was the pert and ready answer. The best house in Al-Baṣra was given up to her; and there she was waited on by her own adherents. Not long after, she left with a retinue of forty handmaids, attended by her brother. 'Alī himself accompanied her a short distance on foot; and a large party went as far as the first stage to bid her farewell. Proceeding to Mecca, she performed the lesser Pilgrimage; and then retiring to Medīna, no more attempted to interfere with the affairs of State. Her nephew 'Abdallah son of Az-Zubeir,[1] retired with her. He became famous in the subsequent history of the Caliphate; but that was not till 'Āisha had passed away. She spent the remainder of her days at Medīna. There crowds of pilgrims visiting the Prophet's grave (her own apartment) gazed wonderingly at the once beautiful and favourite wife of Moḥammad; while she, garrulous in old age, became the fertile source of tradition and the narrator of incidents in the Prophet's life beginning with her earliest childhood. She died in the 58th year of the Hijra, aged sixty-six, having passed forty-seven years in widowhood.[2]

[1] His mother Asmā, 'Āisha's sister, is famous because on the occasion of Moḥammad's flight from the cave she tore her girdle to tie up his wallet, and was hence called "She of the two shreds" (*Life of Moḥammad*, p. 141).

[2] Tradition abounds in anecdotes about 'Āisha. 'Alī's army taunted her as "the *unnatural* Mother of the Faithful." The soldiers on her

A.H. 36.

Basra.

'Ah did not stay long in Al-Basra. Having appointed his cousin, 'Abdallah son of Al-'Abbas, governor of the city, with Ziyad, the able administrator, to aid him in charge of the treasury, he set out for Al-Kūfa.

side, in reply, extemporised a couplet, extolling her as "the noblest and best of Mothers." When they told this to her, she was much affected, and exclaimed, "Would that I had died twenty years before this!" 'Ali, also, when he heard it, said, "Would that I too had died twenty years ago!"

'Aisha, always ready in repartee, was not very particular in her language. 'Asim approaching her litter on the field, she passed him for the liberty he had taken. "It was but a little something red and white," he said impudently, "that I caught a glimpse of." "The Lord uncover thy nakedness," she cried angrily; "cut off thy hands, and make thy wife a widow!" All which (they say) came to pass. A saucy passage is related between her and the aged 'Ammar, who said, as she was leaving, "Praise be to the Lord that we shall hear no more that vile tongue of thine."

When starting for Mecca, with 'Ali and a company around her, she said, "Let us not entertain hard thoughts one against the other, for verily, as regardeth 'Ali and myself, there happened not anything between us" (alluding to her misadventure in the Prophet's litter: *Life of Mohammad*, p. 301), "but that which is wont to happen between a wife and her husband's family; and verily 'Ali was one of the best of them that entertained suspicions against me." 'Ali replied: "She speaketh the truth: there was not between what she said, between her and me." And then he went on to quote Mohammad's own words regarding 'Aisha, that "she was not only his wife in this world, but would be equally his wife in the world to come."

CHAPTER XXXVI

ʿALĪ TRANSFERS HIS SEAT OF GOVERNMENT TO AL-KŪFA. AFFAIRS IN EGYPT

36 A.H. 656-657 A.D.

Medīna abandoned as capital of Islām.

As ʿAlī rode forth from Medīna in pursuit of the insurgent army, a citizen seized his bridle; "Stay!" he cried earnestly; —"if thou goest forth from hence, the government will depart from this City never more to return." He was pushed aside, as one having lost his wits; but his words were long remembered, and the prophecy was true. Medīna was to be the seat of Empire no more.

ʿAlī's entry into Kūfa, vii. 36 A.H. Jan., 657 A.D.

In the 36th year of the Hijra, seven months after the death of ʿOthmān, ʿAlī entered Al-Kūfa. The first four of these had been spent at Medīna; the other three in the campaign of "the Camel" and a short stay at Al-Baṣra. No Caliph had as yet visited Al-Kūfa. It was now to be the seat of ʿAlī's government. The inhabitants were flattered by the honour thus put upon them. The city had certain advantages; for in it were many leading men, able, and some of them willing, to support the Caliph. Moreover, ʿAlī might calculate on the jealousy of Al-ʿIrāḳ towards Syria in the approaching struggle with Muʿawiya. But these advantages were all more than counterbalanced by the factious humour of the populace. It was the focus of Bedawi democracy; and the spirit of the Bedawīn was yet untamed. What had they gained, the men of Al-Kūfa asked, by the insurrection against ʿOthmān? The cry of vengeance on the regicides was for the moment silenced; but things, they said, were drifting back into the old Ḳoreishite groove. The charge was, in fact, the same as the Sons of the Desert were making all round. "ʿAlī hath set up his cousins,

A.H. 36.

Factions spurt there.

the sons of Al-'Abbas, everywhere—in Medina, Mecca, the Yemen, and now again at Al-Basra, while he himself will rule at Al-Kūfa. Of what avail that we made away with 'Othman, and have shed our own blood fighting against Az-Zubeir and Talha?" So spoke the arch-conspirator Al-Ashtar among his friends at Al-Basra; and 'Ali, fearful of such teaching, took him in his train to Al-Kūfa, where, among the excitable populace, there was even greater danger. Another uneasy symptom was that the servile dregs and baser sort of Al-Basra, breaking loose from all control, went forth in a body and took possession of Sijistan on the Persian frontier. They killed the leader sent by 'Ali to suppress the rising, and were not put down till 'Abdallah ibn al-'Abbas himself attacked them with a force from Al-Basra.

Struggle in prospect with Syria.

It was in the West, however, that the sky loured most. It was but a shorn and truncated Caliphate which 'Ali enjoyed, so long as his authority was scorned in Syria. A mortal combat with Mu'āwiya loomed in that direction. But, before resuming the Syrian thread, we must first turn to Egypt.

Keis, governor of Egypt, in. 36 A.H. Aug., 656 A.D.

That heavy charge had been committed to Keis, the principal man of the Ansar and son of Sa'd ibn 'Obada, the citizen who was nearly elected Caliph at the Prophet's death.[1] Of approved ability and judgment, and a loyal follower of 'Ali, he declined to take soldiers with him to Egypt, saying that the Caliph had more need of them than he, and preferring instead the support of seven "Companions," who accompanied him. On his approach, the rebel governor fled to Syria, where he lost his life. Keis was well received by the Egyptians, who swore allegiance to him on behalf of 'Ali. But a strong faction sheltered in a neighbouring district, under the leadership of Yezid ibn al-Harith of the tribe of Kināna, loudly demanded satisfaction for the death of 'Othman. Keis wisely left these alone for the present, waiving even the demand for tithe. In other respects he held Egypt with firm grasp.

In prospect of an early attack by 'Ali, Mu'āwiya became uneasy at the Egyptian border being commanded by so

[1] On the death of 'Othmān, his governor Ibn Abi Sarh was expelled from Egypt by Mohammad ibn Abi Hodhaifa, acting for 'Ali, but he was entrapped and slain by Mu'āwiya.

able a ruler as Ḳeis, whom he made every effort to detach from 'Alī. Upbraiding him with having joined a party still imbued with the blood of 'Othman, he called upon Ḳeis to repent, and promised that, if he joined in avenging the crime, he should be confirmed in the government of Egypt, and his kinsmen promoted to such office as he might desire. Ḳeis, unwilling to precipitate hostilities, fenced his answer with well-balanced words. Of 'Alī's complicity in the foul deed there was as yet, he said, no evidence; he would wait. Meanwhile he had no intention of making attack on Syria. Again pressed by Mu'āwiya, Ḳeis frankly declared that he was, and would remain, a staunch supporter of the Caliph. Thereupon Mu'āwiya sought craftily to stir up jealousy between 'Alī and his Lieutenant. He gave out that Ḳeis was temporising, and spoke of his leniency towards the Egyptian malcontents as proving that he was one at heart with them. The report, assiduously spread, reached, as intended, the court of 'Alī, where it was taken up by those who either doubted the fidelity of Ḳeis or envied his prosperity. To test his obedience, 'Alī ordered an advance against the malcontents; and the remonstrance of Ḳeis against the step as premature was taken as proof of his complicity. He was deposed, and the regicide Moḥammad son of Abu Bekr, appointed in his room. Ḳeis retired in anger to Medina, where, as on neutral ground, adherents of either side were unmolested; but finding no peace there from the taunts of Merwān and others, he at last resolved to cast himself on 'Alī's clemency; and 'Alī, on the calumnies being cleared away, took him back at once into his confidence, and thenceforward kept him as his chief adviser. Mu'āwiya upbraided Merwān with having driven Ḳeis from Medina;—"If thou hadst aided 'Alī," he said, "with a hundred thousand men, it had been a lesser evil than is the gain to him of such a counsellor."

A.H. 36.

Ḳeis supplanted by Mu'āwiya's intrigue.

Moḥammad son of Abu Bekr, appointed to Egypt.

On his own side, however, Mu'āwiya had a powerful and astute adviser in 'Amr, the conqueror of Egypt. During the attack on 'Othman, 'Amr had retired from Medina with his two sons to Palestine. The tidings of the tragedy, aggravated by his own unkindly treatment of the Caliph, affected him keenly. "It is I," he said, "who, by deserting

Mu'āwiya joined by 'Amr.

A.H. 36. the aged man in time of trouble, am responsible for his death." From his retirement he watched the struggle at Al-Basra; and when 'Ali proved victorious, repaired at once to Damascus, and presented himself before Mu'awiya. In consequence of his unfriendly attitude towards 'Othman, Mu'awiya at first received him coldly. In the end, however, the past was condoned and friendship restored. Thenceforward 'Amr was the trusted counsellor of Mu'awiya.

'Ali's position at Kufa weak; This coalition, and the false step of 'Ali in recalling Keis from Egypt, materially strengthened Mu'awiya's hands. The success of 'Ali at Al-Basra had also this advantage for Mu'awiya, that it removed Talha and Az-Zubeir his only other competitors, from the field. The position of 'Ali, again, as one of concession to the Arab faction, was fraught with peril. While refusing ostensibly to identify himself with the murderers of 'Othman, it was virtually their cause that he had fought; and therefore equally the cause of the Arab tribes against Koreish and the aristocracy of Islām. And 'Ali might have foreseen that the socialistic element in this unnatural compromise must, sooner or later, inevitably come into collision with the interests of the Caliphate.

strength of Mu'awiya's at Damascus. The authority of Mu'awiya rested on a firmer basis; his attitude was bolder, his position more consistent. He had from the first resisted the levelling demands of the faction hostile to 'Othman. He was, therefore, now justified in pursuing these to justice, while, at the same time, in so doing, he asserted the supremacy of Koreish. The influence of the "Companions" had always been paramount in Syria; while the Arab element there was itself largely recruited from the aristocratic tribes of the south;—the result being that the Bedawin were by Mu'awiya held thoroughly in check. The cry for vengeance, inflamed by the gory emblems still hanging from the pulpit, was taken up by high and low; while the temporising attitude of 'Ali was in every man's mouth proof of complicity with the regicides. And though many may have dreaded 'Ali's vengeance in the event of his success, the general feeling throughout Syria was a burning desire to avenge the murder of his ill-fated predecessor.

Still, whatever the motives at work elsewhere, the contest

A.H. 36.

'Alī and Mu'āwiya in personal antagonism.

as between 'Alī and Mu'āwiya, was now virtually for the crown; and many looked to "the grey mule of Syria" as having the better chance. A possible solution lay, no doubt, in the erection of Syria into an independent kingdom side by side with that of Al-'Irāḳ and Persia. But the disintegration of the Caliphate was an idea which had as yet hardly entered into the minds of the Faithful. The unity of Islām, established by the precedent of the quarter of a century, was still, and long continued to be, the ruling sentiment of the nation.

CHAPTER XXXVII

BATTLE OF ṢIFFÍN

36-37 A.H. 657 A.D.

Mu'áwiya's defiant reply to 'Alí, viii. 36 A.H. Jan., 657 A.D.

AFTER 'Alí had established himself at Al-Kúfa, there followed a short interval of rest. The lieutenants and commanders, from far and near, flocked to the new capital to do homage to the Caliph. Towards one of these, a Bedawí chief, Mu'áwiya was known to entertain friendly sentiments. Him, therefore, 'Alí deputed to Damascus with a letter, wherein, after making mention of his election to the Caliphate, and the discomfiture of the enemy at Al-Basra, he called on Mu'áwiya to follow the example of the Empire, and take the oath of allegiance. As on a former occasion, the envoy was kept long in waiting. At last he was dismissed with an oral promise that submission would be tendered if punishment were meted out to the regicides, but on no other condition. With this reply the envoy further reported that 'Othmán's blood-stained garment still hung upon the pulpit of the Mosque, and that a multitude of Syrian warriors had sworn "that they would use no water to wash themselves withal, neither sleep upon their beds, till they had slain the murderers of the aged Caliph, and all those that sheltered them."

Seeing Mu'áwiya thus hopelessly alienated, 'Alí, resolved no longer to delay, proclaimed an expedition against Syria. At first the people were slack in answering the call. But after a time he succeeded in gathering together an imposing force of 50,000 men. His plan was to march through Upper Mesopotamia, and so invade Syria from the north. A detachment was sent as an advance-guard along the

western bank of the Euphrates, but meeting with opposition there, was forced to cross back again into Mesopotamia. 'Alī himself, with the main body, marched up the Tigris; then turning short of Mosul to the west, crossed the desert of Mesopotamia, and outstripping his advanced column, reached the Euphrates in its upper course at Ar-Raḳḳa. An unfriendly population lined the banks; and it was not without sanguinary threats that Al-Ashtar forced them to construct a bridge. The army crossed near Ar-Raḳḳa; and then marching some little distance along the right bank, in the direction of Aleppo, met the Syrian outposts.[1]

A.H. 36-37.

'Alī invades Northern Syria, xi. 36 A.H. April, 657 A.D.

On learning of 'Alī's approach, Mu'āwiya lost no time in marshalling his forces, which greatly outnumbered the enemy, and, having no desert or river to cross, were soon to the front. 'Amr was in command, with his two sons as lieutenants. 'Alī, desirous of averting bloodshed, had given orders that, as soon as his troops came upon the enemy, they should halt, and, confining themselves to the defensive, avoid precipitating hostilities before opportunity was given for friendly overture. The vanguards spent the first few days in skirmishing. Al-Ashtar challenged the Syrian officer to single combat; but he was told that, having imbrued his hands in the blood of the late Caliph, he could not claim the privileges of honourable warfare. When the main armies came in sight of each other, 'Alī found Mu'āwiya so encamped as to cut him off from the river, and reduce his army to straits for water. He therefore brought on an engagement, in which Mu'awiya was forced to change his ground, and occupy the memorable field of Ṣiffīn.[2] Some

Mu'āwiya meets 'Alī on the field of Siffīn.

[1] When the people refused to throw a bridge of boats over the river at Ar-Raḳḳa, a detachment moved farther up, intending to cross by the standing bridge at Manbij; but meanwhile Al-Ashtar, threatening the inhabitants with the sword, forced them to construct a bridge at Ar-Raḳḳa. Ar-Raḳḳa (Nicephorium) is at the junction of the Balīkh with the Euphrates, near where the river, having approached Aleppo, trends thereafter eastward. The outposts met at Sūr ar-Rūm, now in ruins, a little to the west of Ar-Raḳḳa. It lies near Thapsacus of the ancients, on the line of Cyrus' march.

[2] Ṣiffīn lay to the west of Ar-Raḳḳa, half-way to Bālis (one of Chesney's steamer stations), and about 100 miles from the coast; south-east of Aleppo, and north-east of Ḥimṣ.

A.H. 36-37. days of inaction followed; after which 'Alī sent three chiefs to demand that, for the good of the commonwealth, Mu'āwiya should tender his allegiance. A scene ensued of fruitless recrimination. Mu'āwiya demanded that the murderers of 'Othmān should be brought to justice; while the demand was stigmatised as a mere cat's-paw covering ambitious designs upon the Caliphate. This was resented as a base calumny by Mu'āwiya. "Begone, ye lying scoundrels!" he cried; "the sword shall decide between us." So saying, he drove them from his presence. Finding all attempt at compromise vain, 'Alī marshalled his army into eight separate columns, each under a Bedawī chieftain of note. As many separate columns were similarly formed on the Syrian side. Every day one of these columns, taking the field in turn, was drawn up against a column of the other army. Desultory fighting in this singular way was kept up throughout the month, there being sometimes as many as two engagements in a day. But the contest was hardly yet begun in earnest. On either side they feared to bring on a common battle, "lest the Muslims should be destroyed, root and branch, in the internecine struggle."

Desultory fighting, xii. 36 A.H. May, 657 A.D.

Truce during first month of 37 A.H. June, 657 A.D.

The new year opened on combatants, wearied by such indecisive strife and inclined to thoughts of peace, and so a truce was called, to last throughout the month. The interval was spent in deputations, but they proved as fruitless as those which had gone before. 'Alī, under the influence of the heated Bedawīn around him, was hardly now disposed even to blame the attack on 'Othmān. When pressed on this point by the Syrian delegates, he avoided a direct reply. "I will not say," was the evasive answer, "that he was wrongly attacked, nor will I say that the attack was justified." "Then," answered the Syrians, "we shall fight against thee, and against every one else who refuseth to say that 'Othmān was not wrongfully put to death;" and with these words took their final leave. On his side, Mu'āwiya declared to the messengers of 'Alī that nothing short of the punishment of the regicides would induce him to quit the field. "What?" exclaimed some one; "wouldest thou put 'Ammār to death?" "And why not?" answered Mu'āwiya; "wherefore should the son of the bondwoman not suffer for having slain the

Fruitless negotiations.

freedman of 'Othmān?"[1] "Impossible," they cried; "where will ye stop? It were easier to bale out the floods of the Euphrates." A.H. 36-37.

So passed the month; and 'Alī seeing things still unchanged, commenced hostilities afresh. He caused proclamation to be made along Mu'awiya's front, summoning the Syrians to allegiance. But it only made them rally more closely round Mu'āwiya; and a company, girding themselves with their turbans in token of the vow, swore that they would defend him to the death. The warfare thus resumed, daily becoming severer and more embittered, 'Alī at last made up his mind to bring on a general and decisive battle. Thus, ten days after the renewal of hostilities, both armies drawn out in entire array, fought till the shades of evening fell, neither having got the better. The following morning, the combat was renewed with greater vigour. 'Alī posted himself in the centre with the flower of his troops from Medina; the wings were formed, one of warriors from Al-Baṣra, the other of those from Al-Kūfa. Mu'āwiya had a pavilion pitched upon the field; and there, surrounded by five lines of his sworn bodyguard, watched the day. 'Amr, with a great weight of horse, bore down upon the Al-Kūfa wing, which gave way; and 'Alī was exposed to imminent peril, both from thick showers of arrows and from close encounter. Reproaching the men of Al-Kūfa for their cowardice, the Caliph fought bravely, his unwieldy figure notwithstanding, sword in hand, and manfully withstood the charge. Al-Ashtar, at the head of three hundred *Readers*,[2] led forward the other wing, which fell with fury on Mu'awiya's "turbaned" bodyguard. Four of its five ranks were cut to pieces, and Mu'awiya, bethinking himself of flight, had already called for his horse, when a martial couplet flashed on his mind, and he held his ground. 'Amr stood by him;—"Courage to-day," he cried, "to-morrow victory." The fifth rank repelled the

Renewal of hostilities, ii. 37 A.H. July, 657 A.D.

Battle of Siffīn, 11, 12, ii. 37 A.H. July 29, 30, 657 A.D.

[1] 'Othmān's freedman was one of his followers slain at Medīna in the final onslaught of the conspirators. The life of 'Ammār, son of the bondwoman Sumeiya, was forfeit for this lesser crime, much more for the assassination of the Caliph. Such was Mu'āwiya's argument.

[2] *Readers* or *Reciters* of the Ḳor'ān, those, namely, who, having it by heart (*Ḥafiz*), were able to repeat it from beginning to end. They were the most fanatical part of the Muslim forces, answering as they did closely to the Ghazies of our day.

A.H. 36-37. danger, and both sides again fought on equal terms. Feats of desperate bravery were displayed by both armies, and heavy was the carnage. On 'Ali's side fell Hashim, the hero of Al Kadisiya. Of even greater moment was the death of 'Ammar, now over ninety years, and one of the leading regicides. As he saw Hashim fall, he exclaimed, "Paradise! how close thou art beneath the arrow's barb and falchion's flash! O Hashim! even now I see heaven opened, and black-eyed maidens bridally attired, clasping thee in their embrace!" So, singing, and refreshing himself with his favourite draught of milk and water, the aged warrior, fired with the ardour of youth, rushed into the enemy's ranks and met the envied fate. Mohammad had once been heard to say to him:—"By a godless and rebellious race, O 'Ammar, thou shalt one day be slain": in other words, that 'Ammar would be killed fighting on the side of right. Thus his death, as it were, condemned the ranks against whom he fought, and spread dismay in Mu'awiya's host. But 'Amr answered readily: "And who is it that hath killed 'Ammar, but 'Ali and the 'rebellious race' that have brought him hither?" The clever repartee ran through the Syrian host, and did much to efface the evil omen.

Battle still rages on third day, 13 Safar, July 31, 657 A.D.

The fighting this day was in real earnest; darkness failed to separate the combatants; and like Al-Kadisiya, that night was called a second *Night of Clangour*. The morning broke on the two armies still in conflict. With emptied quivers they fought hand to hand. Al-Ashtar, the regicide, resolved on victory at whatever cost, continued to push the attack with unflinching bravery and persistence. Mu'awiya, disheartened, began to speak of a judicial combat with a champion on either side. "Then go forth thyself, and challenge 'Ali," said 'Amr. "Not so," answered Mu'awiya. "I will not do that, for 'Ali ever slayeth his man, and then *thou* shouldest succeed me." 'Amr, indeed, well knew that this was not Mu'awiya's line, who himself, like his antagonist, was now of an unwieldy mien. It was no time for continuing grim pleasantry like this; and so 'Amr bethought him of a stratagem. "Raise the leaves of the Kor'an," he cried; "if any refuse to abide thereby, it will sow discord amongst them; if they accept the hallowed symbol it will be a reprieve from cruel slaughter." Mu'awiya caught at the

words. And so forthwith they fixed the sacred leaves on the points of their lances, and raising them aloft, called out along the line of battle: "The law of the Lord! the law of the Lord! Let that decide betwixt us!" No sooner heard, than the men of Al-Kufa leapt forward, re-echoing the cry: "The law of the Lord, that shall decide between us!" As all were shouting thus with one accord, 'Alī stepped forth and expostulated with them: "It is the device," he cried, "of evil men; afraid of defeat, they seek their end by guile, and cloak rebellion under love of the Word." It was all in vain. To every argument they answered (and the Readers loudest of all):—"We are called to the Book, and we cannot decline it." At last, in open mutiny, they threatened the unfortunate Caliph that, unless he agreed, they would desert him, drive him over to the enemy, or serve him as they had served 'Othmān. Seeing opposition futile, 'Alī said: "Stay wild and treasonable words. Obey and fight. But if ye will rebel, do as ye list." "We will not fight," they cried; "recall Al-Ashtar from the field." Al-Ashtar, thus summoned, at the first refused. "We are gaining a great victory," he said, "I will not come;" and he turned to fight again. But the tumult increased, and 'Alī sent a second time to say:—"Of what avail is victory when treason rageth? Wouldst thou have the Caliph murdered, or delivered over to the enemy?" Al-Ashtar unwillingly returned, and a fierce altercation ensued between him and the angry soldiery. "Ye were fighting," he said, "but yesterday for the Lord, and the choicest among you lost their lives. What is it but that ye now acknowledge yourselves in the wrong, and the martyrs therefore gone to hell?" "Nay," they answered, "yesterday we fought for the Lord; and to-day, for the same Lord we stay the fight." On this Al-Ashtar upbraided them as "traitors, cowards, hypocrites, and villains." In return, they reviled him, and struck his charger with their whips. 'Alī interposed. The tumult was stayed. And Al-Ash'ath, chief of the Beni Kinda, was sent to ask Mu'awiya "what his meaning in raising the Kor'an aloft might be." "It is this," he sent answer back, "that we should return, both you and we, to the will of the Lord, as set forth in the Book. Each side shall name an umpire, and their verdict shall be binding." 'Alī's army shouted assent. The unfortunate Caliph was forced to the

A.H. 36-37.

Hostilities suspended for arbitration by Ḳor'ān.

A.H. 36-37.

still deeper humiliation of appointing as his arbiter one who had deserted him. The soldiery cried out for Abu Musa—the temporising governor of Al-Kufa who had been deposed for want of active loyalty. "This man," answered 'Ali, "did but lately leave us and flee; and not till after several months I pardoned him. Neither hath he now been fighting with us. Here is a worthy representative, the son of Al-'Abbas, the Prophet's uncle; choose him as your umpire." "As well name thyself," they answered rudely. "Then take Al-Ashtar." "What!" said the Bedawi chiefs in the same rough imperious strain, "the man that hath set the world on fire! None for us but Abu Musa." It was a bitter choice for 'Ali, but he had no alternative. The Syrian arbiter was 'Amr, for whose deep and crafty ways the other was no match. He presented himself in the Caliph's camp, and the agreement was put in writing. As dictated from 'Ali's side, it ran thus: "*In the name of the Lord Most Merciful!* This is what hath been agreed upon between the Commander of the Faithful, and——" "Stay! cried 'Amr (like Koreish to the Prophet at Al-Hodeibiya[1]); "'Ali is *your* commander, but he is not ours." Again the helpless Caliph had to give way, and the names of the contracting parties were written down simply as between "'Ali and Mu'awiya." The document bound them "to follow the judgment of the Kor'an; and, where the Kor'an was silent, the acknowledged precedents of Islam." To the umpires, the guarantee of both 'Ali and Mu'awiya was given of safety for themselves and for their families, and the promise of the people that their judgment should be followed. On their part, the umpires swore to judge righteously, and thus, so far as in them lay, to reconcile the Faithful. The decision was to be delivered after six months, or later if the umpires saw cause for delay, and at some neutral spot midway between Al-Kufa and Damascus. Meanwhile hostilities should be suspended. The writing having been duly executed and signed, was numerously witnessed by leading chiefs on either side. Al-Ashtar alone refused: "Never should I acknowledge this to be mine own right hand," he said, "if it did but touch a deed like this."

Deed of arbitration, 13 ii. 37 A.H. July 31, 657 A.D.

'Ali and Mu'awiya retire.

And so the armies buried their dead, and quitted the memorable but indecisive battlefield. 'Ali retired to Al-

[1] *Life of Mohammad*, p. 359.

Kūfa, and Mu'āwiya, his point for the present gained, to Damascus. As 'Ali entered Al-Kūfa, he heard wailing on every side. A chief man, whom he bade to pacify the mourners, answered: "O Caliph, it is not as if but two or three had been slain; of this clan alone hard by, an hundred and four score lie buried at Siffīn. There is not a house but the women are weeping in it for their dead." A.H. 36-37.

Discord at Kūfa.

The slaughter, indeed, had been great on both sides. And what gave point to 'Ali's loss was that the truce was but a hollow thing, with no hope in it of lasting peace or satisfaction. The Arab faction, to whose insolent demands he had yielded, was more estranged than ever. When the men of Al-Kūfa murmured at the compromise, 'Ali could but reply that the mutinous soldiery had extorted the agreement from him; and that having pledged his faith, he could not now withdraw. He had thrown in his lot with traitors and regicides, and was now reaping the bitter fruit. Mu'āwiya alone had gained.[1]

[1] The accounts of this battle are all by persons who favoured the cause of 'Ali. Each author exalts the deeds of his own tribe. The one thing that comes out clearly is the heroism of Al-Ashtar.—Wellhausen, *Arabisches Reich*, p. 51 ff.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE KHAWÁRIJ, OR THEOCRATIC FACTION, REBEL AGAINST 'ALI

37 A.H. 657-658 A.D.

Arab faction caught by appeal to Ḳor'ān.

THE quick sagacity of 'Amr had never been turned to better account than when he proposed that the Kor'an should be the arbiter between the contending parties. To be judged by the Book of the Lord had been the cry of the democrats from the beginning. The sacred text gave countenance neither to the extravagant pretensions of Koreish, nor to their rule of favouritism and tyranny. Its precepts were based on the brotherhood of the faithful, and the Prophet himself had enjoined the absolute equality of all. No sooner, therefore, was the Kor'an proclaimed than, as 'Amr anticipated, the Arab chiefs, caught in the snare, took up the cry and pledged themselves thereto.

Dissatisfied.

Reflection soon tarnished the prospect. They had forgotten how narrow was the issue which the umpires had to decide. The Bedawin and democrats were fighting not for one Caliph or the other, but against the pretensions of Koreish at large. It was this that nerved them to the sanguinary conflict. "If the Syrians conquer," cried one of their chiefs, "ye are undone. Again ye will be ground down by tyrants like unto the minions of 'Othman. They will seize upon the conquests of Islam as if, forsooth, they were theirs by inheritance, instead of won by our swords. We shall lose our grasp both of this world and the next." Such were the alleged evils for which they had slain 'Othman, and from which they had been fighting for deliverance. By

the appointment of an umpire, what had they gained? It was a *Theocracy* they had been dreaming of, and now they were drifting back into the abuses of the past. The umpires would decide simply as between Mu'awiya and 'Alī; and, whatever the verdict, despotism would be riveted more firmly than ever upon them. What they really wanted had been lost sight of: nor was there any longer a prospect of its being won. A.H. 37.

Draw off into hostile camp near Kūfa;

Angrily arguing thus, a body of 12,000 men fell out from 'Alī's army on their homeward march, but kept side by side with the rest, at some little distance off. Loud and violent in their speech, they beat about their neighbours in rude Bedawi fashion with their whips, and accused one another of having abandoned the cause of Islām into the hands of godless arbitrators; while others repented of their having betrayed the Caliph on the field of battle, and thus separated themselves from the great body of the Faithful. In this frame of mind they avoided Al-Kufa, but encamped in its vicinity at the village of Harura. Their leaders belonged to the tribes of Temim, Bekr, and Hamdan in Al-Kūfa. They chose for themselves a temporary leader of the Azd tribe. Their war-cry was, "The decision belongs to God," that is, the question of the Caliph must be left to the arbitrament of the sword. Their resolve, however, was that, when they had gained ascendency, they would no longer have any Prince or Caliph at all, and vest the administration of affairs in a Council of State. Such theocratic dreams were not confined to these schismatics, but had widely leavened the factious and fanatic city Al-Kūfa itself.

but persuaded by 'Alī,

'Alī, aware of the danger, sent his cousin, Ibn al-'Abbas, to reason with the seceding body, but to no effect. He then proceeded in person to their camp, and gained over their leader by the promise of the government of Ispahan. He urged that, so far from being responsible for "the godless compromise," as they called the truce, he had been driven to it against his better judgment by their own wayward and persistent obstinacy; that the umpires were bound by its terms to deliver their decision in accordance with the sacred text, which the Theocrats equally with himself held to be the final guide; and if the umpires' deliverance should after all be in disregard of right, he would without hesitation

A.H. 37. reject the same, and again go forth to fight with them against their enemies.

retire to their homes. For the present they were pacified by these assurances; and so, breaking up their camp, they returned to their homes, there to await the decision of the umpires.

CHAPTER XXXIX

DECISION OF THE UMPIRES

37 A.H. 658 A.D.

Interregnum.

THE interval passed uneasily. Mu'āwiya ruled in Syria; 'Alī, over the rest of the Muslim world. Neither, for the moment, interfered with the other. The Empire was for the moment in suspense.

Umpires meet, viii. 37 A.H. Feb., 658 A.D.

Within the time appointed, 'Amr appeared at Dūma, half way across the desert, and, shortly after, Abu Mūsa, each followed, as agreed upon, by a retinue of 400 horse. Thither also flocked multitudes from Al-'Irāḳ and Syria, from Mecca also and from Medina. With intense interest they watched the strange proceeding, which was to decide the future of Islām. The leading chiefs, too, of Ḳoreish were there; some with the distant hope that the choice might haply fall on one of them.

Their conference

The umpires met in a pavilion pitched for the occasion; and there a private conference was held between the two alone. The account preserved is brief and uncertain. Abu Mūsa, pressed by his astute colleague, admitted that the assassination of 'Othmān was a wicked and unjustifiable act. "Then why," rejoined 'Amr, "wilt thou not take Mu'āwiya, the avenger of the Caliph's blood, for his successor?" "If it were a mere question of blood-feud or kinsmanship," said Abu Mūsa, "then 'Othman's sons would have the nearer claim. But succession to the throne must be determined by the chief Companions' vote." 'Amr then proposed his own son. "A just and good man," replied Abu Musa, "but one whom thou hast already made to take sides in the civil war; and above all things we must beware of kindling mutiny again amongst the Arab tribes." A similar objection shut out 'Abdallah son

A.H. 37. of Az-Zubeir; and 'Omar's son was put aside as not having qualities fitted for command. "Then," asked 'Amr, when all possible candidates had been named and negatived, "what may be the judgment thou wouldst give?" "My judgment," answered Abu Mūsa, "would be to depose both 'Ah and Mu'awiya, and then leave the people free to choose as Caliph whom they will."[1] "Thy judgment is also mine," said 'Amr promptly; "let us go forth."

and judgment, The people, in breathless expectation, crowded round the pavilion as the umpires issued from it. "Let them know," said 'Amr to his fellow, "that we are agreed." Abu Mūsa advanced, and with voice loud and clear, said: "We are agreed upon a decision such as, we trust, will reconcile the people, and reunite the empire." "He speaketh true," said 'Amr: "step forth, O Abu Mūsa, and pronounce thy judgment." Then spoke Abu Mūsa: "Ye people! we have considered the matter well. We see no other course for peace and concord, but to depose 'Alī and Mu'awiya both one and other. After that, ye shall yourselves choose a fit man in their room. This is my judgment." He stepped aside, and 'Amr advancing said: "Ye have heard the sentence of Abu Musa. He hath deposed his fellow; and I too depose him. But as for my chief, Mu'awiya, him do I confirm. He is the heir of 'Othman, the avenger of his blood, and the best entitled as Caliph to succeed."

deposing 'Alī.

The people staggered. The assembly was thunderstruck. Even the Syrians had never dreamed of Mu'awiya achieving such a triumph; nor had it entered the minds of those on 'Alī's side, that their umpire could be overreached thus shamefully. "What could I do?" cried Abu Musa, assailed on every hand; "he agreed with me, then swerved aside." "No fault of thine," said Ibn al-'Abbas: "the fault of those who put thee in the place." Overwhelmed with reproaches, Abu Mūsa escaped to Mecca, where he thenceforward lived in obscurity. In the heat of indignation, the commander of the Al-Kūfa bodyguard seized

[1] Rather he wished to leave the choice to a Shūrà or Council such as had elected 'Othmān. Mu'awiya could afford to agree to this since he was not proclaimed Caliph till the year 40 A.H. 'Alī, on the other hand, claimed to be Caliph already. His refusal to submit to the decision of a council was a breach of faith, and Wellhausen thinks the story in the last paragraph was an invention of his party to hide his breach of faith, and lay the blame on the arbiters.

'Amr, and was roughly handling him, when the people interposed to set him free. 'Amr returned forthwith to Damascus, where by acclamation Mu'āwiya was saluted Caliph, though he did not assume the title until some years later. A.H. 37.

How the startling intelligence affected 'Alī, may be judged by the fact that to the prescribed daily service he now added a petition cursing by name Mu'āwiya, 'Amr, and their chief adherents. Mu'āwiya was nothing loth to follow his example. And so the world was edified by the spectacle of the two rival commanders of the Faithful uttering commination one against the other in the public prayers.[1] Mu'āwiya saluted Caliph by Syrians.

[1] The imprecation used by 'Alī was as follows: "O Lord, I beseech Thee, let Mu'āwiya be accursed, and 'Amr," and so on with the chief leaders by name. "Let them be accursed all!" Mu'āwiya's imprecations, in the same way, included 'Alī, his sons Al-Ḥasan and Al-Ḥosein, and Al-Ashtar.

CHAPTER XL

THE KHAWĀRIJ, OR THEOCRATIC SEPARATISTS,[1] DEFEATED AT NAHRAWAN

37 A.H. 658 A.D.

'Alī's design against Syria.

'ALĪ was not content with heaping on his rival malediction. He resolved on immediate renewal of hostilities. There was, however, other work before him in first dealing with an enemy nearer home.

Hostile attitude of theocratic faction, ix. 37 A.H. Feb., 658 A.D.

Ever since they had broken up their camp at Harūrā, the Khawārij, instead of settling down in sentiments of loyalty and peace, had been gaining in aggressive force and turbulence. There should be no oath of fealty, was the theocratic cry, but to the Lord alone, the Mighty and the Glorious. To swear allegiance to either 'Alī or Mu'āwiya was in derogation of that great name. "Both sides," they said, "are coursing along, neck and neck, in the race of apostasy: the Syrians run after Mu'āwiya right or wrong, and ye swear for 'Alī through black and white. It is nought but blasphemy." So they drew up their creed in one short sentence: *No arbitration but that of God alone*; and this they insolently flung in 'Alī's teeth.[2] In vain the Caliph argued, as before, that arbitration had been forced upon him by themselves. "True," they readily replied; "but we have repented of that lapse; and thou must repent of it too or else we shall fight against thee; and if so be we are slain, we shall gladly meet our Lord." 'Alī yet hoped to win them

[1] The name [Khāriji, *pl.* Khawārij] may also mean "those who have gone out for the sake of their religion," like Muhājirūn. *Cf.* Kor. iv. 101.

[2] *La ḥukma illa lillahi.* The creed of the Separatists was that Believers being absolutely equal, there should be no Caliph, nor oath of allegiance sworn to any man, the government being in the hands of a Council elected by the people.

over. He bore with their seditious talk; and made his intention known of treating them forbearingly. "They should have free access to the mosques for prayer. If they joined his army, they would share the booty like the rest. So long as they refrained from any overt act, he would use no force of arms against them." A.H. 37. Ali's forbearance.

Instead of pacifying the fanatics, this moderation but emboldened them. At last, when the umpires' judgment was delivered, they denounced it as amply justifying their secession, and resolved at once to raise the divine standard. They looked for heavenly interposition; but even if they perished, it was a righteous cause which must triumph in the end; and they themselves, protesting against a wicked world, would surely be inheritors of the world to come. Accordingly, about a month after the arbitration, they began, in concert with the brethren who sympathised with them at Al-Baṣra, to leave their homes by stealth. The conspirators from Al-Baṣra, 500 strong, under a Tamimite, were pursued by the governor, but effecting their escape, joined the party which in greater force had issued forth from Al-Kufa. Secular power, and the pomp of this life, were abhorrent from the covenanting creed; and it was only after many had declined the dangerous pre-eminence, and then simply as a temporary expedient, that a leader was prevailed on to accept the chief command. The design was to seize Al-Medain, and there, under a Council of Representatives, establish theocratic rule as a model to the ungodly cities all around. But the governor had timely warning and repulsed the attempt. They passed on, and in small bodies crossing the Tigris farther up, assembled at Nahrawan 4000 strong, under a chief of their own choice, 'Abdallah ibn Wahb. Khawārij march on Nahrawān, x. 37 A.H. March, 658 A.D.

Like all fanatics, they would strain out a gnat and swallow a camel. They perpetrated terrible atrocities; but one of them having speared a pig went away to compensate its owner, and another would not eat a date which he had picked up because he had not paid for it.

'Ali did not at first recognise the serious bearing of the movement. The number was comparatively small; and he hoped that, immediately they saw their former comrades in Ali orders levy for Syrian campaign,

A.H. 37.

arms marching against the graceless Syrians, they would not hesitate again to join his standard. So 'Alī mounted the pulpit and harangued the men of Al-Kūfa. He denounced the umpires as having cast the Book of the Lord, equally with the Prophet's precedent, behind their backs. Both were apostates, rejected of the Lord, of the Prophet also, and of all good men;—"Wherefore," said he, "we must fight our battle over again at the point where, on the eve of victory, we were forced to leave it off. Prepare to march for Syria, and be ready in your camp without the city by the second day of the coming week." Then he indited a despatch to the fanatics at Nahrawān. It was couched in similar terms, and ended thus: "Now, therefore, return forthwith and join the army. I am marching against the common enemy, yours and ours. We have come back to the time when at Siffīn ye fought by my side; now follow me again." In reply they sent an insulting message:—"If 'Alī would acknowledge his apostasy and repent of it, then they would see whether anything could be arranged between them; otherwise they cast him off as an ungodly heretic." The stiff-necked Theocrats were thereupon, for the present, left to their own devices, and the business of raising levies for Syria proceeded with. But little enthusiasm was anywhere displayed. Of 60,000 fighting men on the stipendiary roll at Al-Basra, 3000 were with difficulty got together. At Al Kufa, after vain appeal, a conscription was ordered through the heads of clans; and thus at length an army of 65,000 was brought into the field.

and summons Khawārij, who refuse tor join him.

'Alī sets out for Syria;

With this imposing force, 'Alī had already commenced his march on Syria, when tidings reached him that the fanatic host was committing outrage throughout the country in the very outskirts of the camp.[1] A messenger sent to make inquiry met the common fate. Tidings becoming more and more alarming, the army demanded to be led against them; "for how," said they, "can we leave such outlaws at large behind us, with homes exposed to their unlicensed cruelty?" 'Alī, himself convinced of this,

but is diverted by Khāriji excesses,

[1] The outrages were to the last degree barbarous and cold-blooded. Travellers, men and women, refusing to confess the theocratic tenets were put to death; a woman great with child ripped up with the sword, and so forth.

changed his course, crossed the Tigris, and marched against the fanatics. When now near Nahrawān, he sent a messenger to demand surrender of all such as had been guilty of outrage and murder. "Give up these to justice," he said, "and ye shall be left alone until the Lord grant us victory in Syria, and then haply He shall have turned your hearts again toward us." They replied that "they were all equally responsible for what had passed, and that the blood of the ungodly heretics they had slain was shed lawfully." A parley ensued, in which the Caliph expostulated with the misguided fanatics, and offered quarter to all who should come over to his army, or retire peaceably to their homes. Some obeyed the call and came over; 500 went off to a neighbouring Persian town, and many more dispersed to their homes; but 1800 remained upon the field, martyrs to the theocratic creed. With the wild battle-cry, *To Paradise!* they rushed upon the lances of the Caliph's force, and to a man were slain. 'Alī's loss was trifling. The date of the battle is 9, ii. 38 A.H., July 17, 658 A.D.

A.H. 37.

who are dispersed and slain.

It had been better for the peace of Islām if not one of the 4000 had escaped. The snake was scotched, not killed. The fanatic spirit was strangely catching; and the theocratic cause continued to be canvassed vigorously and unceasingly, though in secret, both at Al-Baṣra and Al-Kufa. However hopeless their object, the fanatics were nerved, if not by expectation of divine aid, at the least by sure hope of the martyr's crown. In the following year, bands of insurgent fanatics once and again appeared unexpectedly in the field, denouncing 'Alī, and proclaiming that the kingdom of the Lord was at hand. One after another they were cut to pieces, or put to flight with ease. Still such continual risings could not but endamage the name and power of 'Alī, who now reaped the fruit of his weak compromise with the enemies of 'Othmān, and neglect to bring them to justice. Fanatics in their extravagant doctrine, these men were too sincere to combine with any purely political sect, and hence they seldom came near to leaving any permanent mark of their creed behind them. But both in the present and in succeeding reigns, we find them every now and then gathering up their strength

The Khawārij a chronic thorn in the Empire.

A.H. 37. dangerously to assail the Empire, and as often beaten back. Ever and anon, for ages, these *Khawārij* "went forth" (as the name implies) on their desperate errand, a thorn in the side of the Caliphate, and a terror to the well-disposed.

CHAPTER XLI

REVOLT OF EGYPT

38 A.H. 658 A.D.

HAVING dispersed the fanatics at Nahrawān and recrossed the Tigris, 'Alī turned his face again towards Syria. But the troops urged that, before so long a campaign, their armour needed refitting. "Let us return for a little to our homes," they said, "to furbish up our swords and lances, and replenish our empty quivers." 'Alī consenting, they marched back and encamped in the vicinity of Al-Kūfa. The soldiers dropped off in small parties thither; and in a short time the camp was left almost empty. 'Alī, finding that none returned, became impatient, and himself entering Al-Kūfa, again harangued the people on the obligation to go forth with him and make war on Syria. But exhortation and reproach fell equally on listless ears. There was no response. 'Alī lost heart. The Syrian expedition fell through, and the opportunity passed.

Alī gives up Syrian campaign. End of 37 A.H. April, 658 A.D.

Thus closed the 37th year of the Hijra. The situation was unchanged. Mu'awiya, with now a colourable title to the Caliphate, remained in undisturbed possession of Syria, strong in the loyalty and affections of his subjects; while 'Alī, mortified by an indifferent and alienated people, was now to experience a severer trial in the loss of Egypt.

Position of 'Alī and Mu'āwiya.

We have seen that a powerful faction in that dependency sided with those demanding satisfaction for the blood of 'Othmān; and that Ḳeis having been recalled for not suppressing the dissentients, Moḥammad son of Abu Bekr had been appointed in his room. Casting aside the wise policy of his predecessor, Moḥammad demanded of the recusants at once to submit, or to be gone from Egypt.

Egypt in revolt.

A.H. 38.

They refused, but masking their hostile designs, watched the issue of the struggle at Siffīn. When on its conclusion Mu'āwiya was still left master of Syria, they gained heart and began to assume the offensive. Though repeatedly defeated, the slumbering elements of revolt were everywhere aroused, and Mu'āwiya, seeing his opportunity, commissioned 'Amr to regain the province of which he had been first conqueror.

'Amr conquers Egypt for Mu'āwiya, ii. 38 A.H. July, 658 A.D.

'Alī saw, now all too late, the mistake which he had made. He would have reappointed Keis; but Keis declined again to take the post. The only other fitted for the emergency was Al-Ashtar, the regicide, who was sent off in haste to Egypt. But on the way he met with an untimely death, having being poisoned (at the instigation, it is said, of Mu'āwiya) by a chief on the Egyptian border with whom he rested. There was joy at the death of the arch-regicide throughout Syria, where he was greatly feared. Alī was equally cast down by the untoward event. His only resource was now to bid Mohammad hold on and do what he could to retrieve his position.[1] But the faction which favoured Mu'āwiya gained ground daily; and when 'Amr, taking advantage of the defection of 'Alī's troops, at the head of a few thousand men crossed the border, he was joined by an overwhelming body of insurgents. Mohammad, after a vain attempt to fight, was slain, and his body ignominiously burned in an ass's skin.[2] Thus Egypt was lost to 'Alī; and 'Amr, as lieutenant of the rival Caliph, again became its governor.

'Alī's mortification at loss of Egypt.

The loss of Egypt was the harder for 'Alī to bear, as immediately due to his own mistake in removing Keis; and even now it might have been retrieved if the men of Al-Kūfa had not been heartless in his cause. Over and again he implored them to hasten to the defence of Mohammad.

[1] According to other accounts, Keis was immediately succeeded by Al-Ashtar, after whom came the son of Abu Bekr. Wellhausen, p. 61.

[2] 'Amr had offered Mohammad quarter. But he was caught in his flight by a chief so incensed against the regicides that he slew him in cold blood, and having put his body in an ass's skin, cast it into the flames. 'Aisha was inconsolable at her brother's fate, and, though her politics were all against 'Alī, she now cursed Mu'āwiya and 'Amr in her daily prayers, and thenceforward ate no roasted meat or pleasant food until her death.

With difficulty two thousand men were got together, but after so long delay that they had hardly marched before news of the defeat made it necessary to return. 'Alī thereupon ascended the pulpit, and upbraided the people for their spiritless and disloyal attitude. For fifty days he had been urging them to go forth, to avenge their fallen brethren, and help those still struggling in the field. Like a restive, wayward camel, casting its burden, they had held back. "And now," he said, in grief and bitterness of spirit, "the son of Abu Bekr is fallen a martyr, and Egypt hath departed from us." A.H. 38.

CHAPTER XLII

REMAINDER OF 'ALI'S REIGN

38-40 A.H. 658-660 A.D.

Remainder of 'Ali's reign.

No gleam of fortune lighted up the remaining days of 'Ali's reign. What with fanatics at home, and the rival Caliphate abroad, his life was one continual struggle. And, moreover, the daily exhibition of indifference and disloyalty in Al-Kufa, the city of his choice, was a mortification hard to bear.

Rising at Basra suppressed, 38 A.H. 658 A.D.

The loss of Egypt and cruel death of Mohammad preyed upon his mind. He withdrew into strictest privacy. His cousin, Ibn al-'Abbas, governor of Al-Basra, fearful lest he should resign, or do something rash and unadvised, set out to visit and comfort him. Mu'awiya seized the opportunity to stir up in his absence the disaffected elements at Al-Basra. Among the various clans, he was sure of finding many there who, equally with himself, sought to avenge the blood of 'Othman; few were zealously attached to the cause of 'Ali; the remainder were mostly of the theocratic faction, now quite as hostile to 'Ali as to Mu'awiya. The Syrian emissary, carrying for this end a letter to the citizens of Al-Basra, was so well received that Ziyad, who held the city's temporary charge, was forced to retire with the treasure and pulpit of State into the stronghold of a loyal clan, from whence he wrote for help to Al-Kufa. 'Ali at once despatched a chief having influence with the local tribes, who were by his persuasion induced to rally round Ziyad. After severe fighting in the city, the rebels were at last defeated and driven for refuge to a neighbouring castle. There surrounded, the castle was set on fire, and the Syrian envoy, with seventy followers, perished in the flames. The victory was decisive for the time; but the insurrection had

brought to light the alarming spread of disaffection, and showed how precarious was 'Ali's grasp upon the Bedawi races of factious Al-Baṣra. A.H. 38-40.

The spirit of disturbance and unrest was not confined to Egypt and to Al-Baṣra. In a single year, we read of some half-dozen occasions on which considerable bands of the Khawārij were impelled by their theocratic creed to raise the standard of rebellion. One after another they met the common fate of slaughter and dispersion. But though crushed, the frequent repetition of such desperate enterprises, fruit of a wild and reckless fanaticism, had a disturbing effect. Khāriji risings.

The most serious of these risings was that led by Al-Khirrīt ibn Rashid of the Beni Nājiya; and it is the more remarkable, because this chief had fought bravely with his tribe by 'Ali's side in the battles both of the Camel and of Ṣiffin. He was driven, like many others, by strong conviction to rebel. The position of this fanatic was that 'Alī ought to have accepted the decision of the arbiters to refer the question of the Caliphate to a Council. 'Ali, with his usual patience, said that he would argue out the matter with him, and arranged a meeting for the purpose. But the night before, Al-Khirrīt stole away from the city with his following. "Gone," said 'Alī, "to the devil; lost, like doomed Thamūd!" They were pursued, but effected their escape to Al-Ahwaz. There they raised the Persians, Kurds, and Christian mountaineers, by the specious and inflammatory cry that payment of taxes to an ungodly Caliph was but to support his cause, and as such intolerable. With a band of rebel Arabs, they kindled revolt throughout Fars and put the governor to flight. A force from Al-Baṣra drove them to the shores of the Indian Ocean. But they broke out again in Al-Bahrein, where the tribes had been withholding the taxes, and some had returned to the Christian faith. Luring the people by delusive promises, they still gained head; and it was not till after a bloody battle in which Al-Khirrīt lost his life, that the supremacy of the Caliphate was re-established in southern Persia. The Muslim prisoners in this campaign were set at liberty on swearing fresh allegiance; but 500 Christians were marched away to be sold into captivity. The women and children, as they were torn from their protectors, wailed with loud and Rebellion of Khirrīt in S. Persia, 38 A.H. 658 A.D.

Khirrīt defeated and slain.

A.H. 38-40. bitter cry. The hearts of many were softened. Maskala, one of the captains, touched by the scene, took upon himself the cost of ransoming the Christian captives and set them free. 'Alī, hearing of it, demanded from him immediate payment at a thousand pieces for each captive; and Maskala, unable to pay down so great a sum, fled and joined Mu'āwiya.

Ziyād governor of Fars. 39 A.H. 659 A.D.

The defeat of the Khawārij did not at once restore peace to Persia; for Fars and Kirmān threw off their allegiance and expelled their governors. To quell the spreading insurrection, 'Alī employed Ziyād from Al-Basra, a man, as we have seen, of conspicuous administrative ability. He carried with him a great court and retinue; but it was mainly by setting one rebellious prince against another, and by well-appointed promises and favours, that he succeeded in restoring peace; and by his success earned the government of Fars. He fixed his court at Istakhr (Persepolis), and his administration there became so famous as even to recall to Persian memories the happy age of Anūsharwān.

Syrian expeditions against 'Irāk, 38-39 A.H. 659 A.D.

Though successful thus in Persia, Alī was subject to trouble and molestation nearer home. Mu'āwiya, relieved now from apprehension on the side of Egypt, began to annoy his rival by frequent raids on Arabia and the cities beyond the Syrian desert. The object was various—now to ravage a Province or surprise a citadel, now to exact the tithe from Bedawi tribes, or secure allegiance to himself. Such inroads, though not always successful, inspired a sense of insecurity; and worse, betrayed the lukewarmness of the people in the cause of 'Alī. These would stir neither hand nor foot to repel the Syrians invading villages close even at their door. To show his displeasure at their listlessness and disobedience, 'Alī went forth himself into the field almost unattended. On this, the men of Al-Kūfa, partly from shame, partly lured by promise of increased stipends, marched to the defence of their frontier. In the year 39 A.H. there were nearly a dozen inroads of the kind. Though eventually repelled, it was not always without loss in prisoners, plunder, and prestige. On one occasion 'Alī's commander, with a flying column, pursued the raiders back into the heart of Syria as far as Baalbek; and thence, turning northward, escaped by Ar-Rakka again into Al-'Irāk. On the other hand, Mu'āwiya,

to show his contempt for the power of 'Alī, made an incursion right across Mesopotamia, and for some days remained encamped on the banks of the Tigris. After leisurely inspecting Al-Mauṣil, which he had never seen before, he made his way back to Damascus unmolested. A.H. 38-40. Mu'āwiya visits Al-Mauṣil.

The 40th year of the Hijra opened with a new grief for 'Alī. When the time of pilgrimage came round, Mu'āwiya sent Busr, a brave but cruel captain of his host, with 3000 men into Arabia, to secure for him the allegiance of the Holy Places. As he drew nigh to Medina, the governor fled and Busr entered unopposed. Proceeding to the Mosque, he mounted the sacred steps of the Prophet's pulpit, and recalling 'Othmān to mind, addressed the people thus: "O citizens of Medina! The aged man! Where is the grey-haired aged man whom, but as yesterday, and on this very spot, I swore allegiance to? Verily, but for my promise to Mu'awiya, who bade me stay the sword, I had not left here a single soul alive!" Then he threatened the leading citizens with death if they refused to acknowledge Mu'āwiya as their Caliph; and so, fearing for their lives, all took the oath of allegiance to the Umeiyad ruler. Passing on to Mecca, the same scene was enacted by the imperious envoy there, and with the same result.[1] Then marching south to the Yemen, he committed great atrocities there upon the adherents of 'Alī. The governor, a son of Al-'Abbās, escaped to his cousin 'Alī at Al-Kūfa. But two of his little children, falling into the tyrant's hands, were put to death in cold blood, with their Bedawi attendant, who in vain protested against the cruel act. An army of 4000 men was despatched in haste from Al-Kufa, but too late to stop these outrages; and Busr made good his escape to Syria. The wretched Peninsula fared no better at the hands of the relieving army. Many of the inhabitants of Nejran were put to death because they had belonged to 'Othman's party. The men of Mecca were forced to recall the oath they had just taken, and again do homage to 'Alī. Similarly, the citizens of Medina swore allegiance to Al-Hasan, son of 'Alī, at the point of the sword; but no sooner were the troops gone, than the leader of the

Raid of Busr on Arabia, 40 A.H. 660 A.D.

Infant children of 'Alī's cousin slain.

[1] On Busr's approach, Abu Mūsa (the umpire) fled from Mecca for his life. The unfortunate man had been living there ever since the arbitration, equally obnoxious to both sides.

A.H. 38-40. opposite faction resumed his functions. Thus bitterly was the Peninsula rent in two. The cruel death of his cousin's infant children preyed on 'Alī more, perhaps, than all his other troubles; and he cursed Busr in the daily service with a new and bitter imprecation. The disconsolate mother poured forth her sorrow in plaintive verse, some touching couplets of which are still preserved [1]

'Abdallah son of 'Abbās retires to Mecca.

Yet another grief was in store for 'Alī. He had promoted his cousins, the sons of Al-'Abbās, to great dignity, giving the command of the Yemen to one, of Mecca to another, of Medina to a third; while 'Abdallah, the eldest, held the government of Al-Basra, the second city in the Empire. Complaints having reached the court of irregularities at Al-Basra, 'Alī called upon his cousin to render an account. Scorning the demand, 'Abdallah threw up the office, and, carrying his treasures with him, retired to Mecca. 'Alī was much mortified at this unfriendly act; and still more by the desertion of his brother 'Aḳīl to Mu'āwiya.

Alī concludes treaty with Mu'āwiya, 40 A.H. 660 A.D.

These troubles, crowding rapidly one upon another, at last broke 'Alī's spirit. He had no longer heart to carry on hostilities with Syria. If he might but secure the eastern provinces in peaceful subjection to himself, it was all he could hope for now. Accordingly, after a lengthened correspondence, an armistice was concluded between 'Alī and Mu'āwiya, by which they agreed to lay aside their arms, respect the territory of each other, and maintain, in time to come, a friendly attitude. Mu'āwiya, however, assumed the title of Caliph at Jerusalem in July 660 A.D. ii 40 A.H.; and it is said that 'Alī gathered an army of 40,000 men, when the events narrated in the next chapter occurred.

[1] For example:

"Ah! who hath seen my two little ones—
Darlings hidden, like pearls within their shell?"

As grandchildren of Al-'Abbās, their fate naturally occupies a conspicuous place in 'Abbāssid tradition. 'Alī cursed Busr, praying that he might lose his senses, and in answer to the prayer he became, we are told, a hopeless, drivelling idiot.

CHAPTER XLIII

ASSASSINATION OF 'ALI

40 A.H. 661 A.D.

THE Khawarij were sorely troubled at the prospects of Islām. It was not that raids and robbery, dissension and strife, had been the order of the day, for to them bloodshed was more tolerable than apostasy. To the Khariji, the cessation of war brought no peace of mind. A settled government was the ruin of his hopes. 'Alī, having come to terms with 'Mu'awiya, there was no longer room to expect that the ungodly kingdoms of the earth would be overthrown, and the reign of righteousness restored. Thus the theocratic party brooded over the blood that had been shed in vain at Nahrawan and on other battlefields, and for the present abandoned hope. Many took refuge from the godless tyranny in the sacred precincts of the Ḥijāz, where they might lament freely over the miserable fate of Islam. As three of these thus mourned together, a gleam of hope shot across their path. "Let us each kill one of the tyrants; Islam will yet be free, and the reign of the Lord appear." And so, as in the case of 'Othman, but under another guise and urged by bolder hopes, the three conspired against the State. The fatal resolve once taken, details were speedily arranged. 'Ali and Mu'awiya, both must fall; and 'Amr also, not only as the impious arbitrator, but also as the likeliest successor to the throne left vacant by the other two. Each was to dispose of his fellow as he presided at the morning service, on the same Friday when, being the Fast, the Grand Mosques of Al-Kufa, Damascus, and Fusṭaṭ would be thronged with worshippers. They dipped their swords in powerful poison, and separated, swearing

Conspiracy to assassinate 'Alī, Mu'āwiya, and 'Amr, 40 A.H. 661 A.D.

A.H. 40.

that they would either fulfil the task or perish in the attempt. 'Amr escaped. He was sick that day, and the captain of his guard, presiding at prayers, died in his stead. Mu'áwiya was not so fortunate. The blow fell upon him, and was near to being fatal. His physician declared his life could be saved only by the cautery, or by a potent draught that would deprive him of the hope of further progeny. He shrank from the cautery, and chose the draught. The remedy was effectual, and he survived.

'Amr escapes. Mu'áwiya wounded; recovers.

'Alí wounded in the Mosque at Kúfa.

At Al-Kúfa things turned out differently. The conspirator Ibn Muljam was able on the spot to gain two desperate accomplices from the Beni Taym. That tribe, deeply imbued with the fanaticism of the day, had suffered severely in the massacre of Nahrawan, and nursed resentment ever since against the Caliph. Ibn Muljam loved a maid of the Beni Taym, who having on that fatal day lost father, brother, and other relatives, was roused thereby to a savage ardour. "Bring me," said the damsel to her lover, "the head of 'Alí as my dower; if thou escapest alive, thou shalt have me as thy guerdon here; if thou perish, thou shalt enjoy better than me above." So she introduced him to two accomplices, who, burning with the same spirit of revenge as Ibn Muljam, were to lie in wait on either side of the door leading into the crowded Mosque. At the time appointed, the Caliph entered the assembly calling aloud as usual, *To prayers, ye people! To prayers!* Immediately he was assailed on either hand. The sword of one conspirator fell upon the lintel; but Ibn Muljam wounded the Caliph severely on the head and side. He was seized. Of his accomplices one was cut to pieces, the other in the tumult fled. 'Alí was carried into the palace with strength enough to question the assassin who was brought before him. Ibn Muljam declared boldly that the deed had been forty days in contemplation, during all which time it had been his prayer that "the wickedest of mankind might meet his fate." "Then," replied 'Alí, "that must have been thyself." So saying, he turned to his son, Al-Hasan, and bade him keep the assassin in close custody: "If I die, his life is forfeit; but see thou mutilate him not, for that is forbidden by the Prophet." During the day Um Kulthum went into the assassin's cell and cursed him, adding, what no doubt she would have fain

believed, "My father shall yet live." "Then, Lady," replied the fanatic, "whence these tears? Listen. That sword I bought for a thousand pieces, and a thousand more it cost to poison it. None may escape its wound." A.H. 40.

It soon became evident that the wound indeed was mortal. They asked the Caliph whether, if he died, it was his will that his son should succeed to the throne. Still true to the elective principle, 'Alī answered: "I do not command it, neither do I forbid. See ye to it." Then he called Al-Ḥasan and Al-Ḥosein to his bedside, and counselled them to be steadfast in piety and resignation, and kind to their younger brother, the son of his Ḥanefite wife. After that he wrote his testament, and continuing to repeat the name of the Lord, so breathed his last. When they had performed the funeral obsequies, Al-Ḥasan arraigned the assassin before him. Nothing daunted, Ibn Muljam said: "I made a covenant with the Lord before the Holy House at Mecca, that I would slay both 'Alī and Mu'āwiya. Now, if thou wilt, I shall go forth and kill the other, or perish in the attempt. If I succeed, I will return and swear allegiance unto thee." "Nay," said Al-Ḥasan, "not before thou hast tasted of the fire." He was put to death, and the body, tied up in a sack, was committed to the flames.

Death of 'Alī, 17 ix. 40 A.H. Jan. 25, 661 A.D.

Ibn Muljam put to death.

'Alī died sixty years of age. His troubled and contested reign had lasted but four years and nine months. In his youth he was one of the most distinguished heroes in the early wars of Islām. But after the Prophet's death he took no part in any of the military expeditions. In his later years he became heavy and obese, and his bald and portly figure was a subject of ridicule to his enemies. For a time he was content with a single wife, the Prophet's daughter Fāṭima, by whom he had three sons[1] and two daughters, the progenitors of the Seiyid race—the nobility of Islam. After she died, he took many women into his *ḥarīm*, both free and servile, by whom he had, in all, eleven sons and fifteen daughters. 'Alī was a tender-hearted father. In his later years a little girl was born to him, with whose prattle he would beguile his troubles; he had her always on his knee, and doted on her with a special

'Alī's wives and children.

[1] One of these died in infancy; the other two were Al-Ḥasan and Al-Ḥosein.

A.H. 40.

love.[1] He was the last of the four "rightly guided" Chalifs, and the first of the twelve Shi'ite Imāms.

'Ali's forbearance and magnanimity.

In the character of 'Ali there are many things to commend. Mild and beneficent, he treated Al-Ba'ra, when prostrate at his feet, with a generous forbearance. Towards theocratic fanatics, who wearied his patience by incessant intrigue and insensate rebellion, he showed no vindictiveness. Excepting Mu'awiya, the man of all others whom he ought not to have estranged, he carried the policy of conciliating his enemies to a dangerous extreme. In compromise, indeed, and in procrastination, lay the failure of his Caliphate. With greater vigour, spirit, and determination, he might have averted the schism which for a time threatened the existence of Islam, and which has since never ceased to weaken it.

Wise but inactive.

'Ali was wise in counsel, and many an adage and sapient proverb has been attributed to him. But, like Solomon, his wisdom was for other than himself. His career must be characterised a failure. On the election of Abu Bekr, influenced by Fatima, who claimed and was denied a share in her father's property, he retired for a time into private life. Thereafter we find him taking part in the counsels of Abu Bekr and his successors, and even performing the functions of Chief Judge. But he never asserted the leading position, which, as cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, might have been expected of him; nor is there aught to show that this was due to other cause than an easy and inactive temperament. One indelible blot rests on the escutcheon of 'Ali, his flagrant breach of duty towards his sovereign ruler. He had sworn allegiance to 'Othman, and by him he was bound to have stood in the last extremity. Instead, he held ignobly aloof, while the Caliph fell a victim to red-handed treason. Nor can the plea avail that he was himself under pressure. Had there been a loyal will to help, there would have been a ready way. In point of fact, his attitude gave colour to the

Desertion of 'Othmān a blot upon his name.

[1] The mother of this little girl belonged to the Beni Kilāb. The child lisped, and pronouncing *l* like *s*, was unable to say *Kilāb*: when asked to what tribe she belonged, she would imitate the bark of a dog (kilab being the plural of kelb, meaning "a dog"), to the great delight of 'Alī and his courtiers.

charge even of collusion.[1] And herein 'Alī must be held accountable not only for a grave dereliction of duty, but for a fatal error which shook the stability of the Caliphate itself, as he was himself not long in finding to his cost. A.H. 40.

Tradition, strange to say, is silent, and opinion uncertain, as to where the body of 'Alī lies. Some believe that he was buried in the Great Mosque at Al-Kufa, others in the palace. Certainly, his tomb was never, in early times, the object of any care or veneration. The same indifference attached to his memory throughout the realm of Islām, as had attached to his person during life, and it was not till a generation had passed away that any sentiment of special reverence or regard for the husband of the Prophet's daughter, and father of his only surviving progeny, began to show itself. Burial place unknown.

There is no trace whatever at this period of the extravagant claims of later days. On the contrary, even at Al-Kufa, the capital that should have been proud of its Caliph, there prevailed at this time towards him and his family an utter want of enthusiasm and loyalty, amounting at times to disaffection. The fiction of the divine *Imāmship* was a reaction in favour of 'Alī's descendants, arising out of the coming tragedy at Kerbala and cruel fate of the Prophet's progeny, which, fostered by 'Alid and 'Abbāsid faction, soon became a powerful lever, skilfully and unscrupulously used, to overthrow the Umeiyad dynasty. Divine Imāmate, a fiction of later growth.

[1] See above, p. 230, and note.

CHAPTER XLIV

AL-HASAN SUCCEEDS 'ALI. ABDICATES IN FAVOUR OF MU'ĀWIYA

40-41 A.H. 661 A.D.

Hasan succeeds his father, 40 A.H. 661 A.D.,

WHEN they had committed 'Ali, we know not where, to his last home, Al-Kūfa did homage, as it were by common consent, to Al-Hasan, his eldest son. But Al-Hasan was a poor-spirited creature, more intent on varying the charms of his ever-changing *harīm* than on the business of public life, and altogether unworthy his descent as grandson of the Prophet.

but is attacked by Mu'āwiya and mobbed by his own troops.

It was now Mu'awiya's opportunity for asserting his title to the whole Muslim Empire. Already he was recognised as Caliph throughout Syria and Egypt. Al-Hasan had at command the army of 40,000 prepared by his father, but he had no stomach for the war. Sending forward his vanguard of 12,000 men, under the brave and faithful Keis, to meet the enemy, he himself followed irresolutely; and, with the bulk of his army, rested at Al-Medain amidst the luxurious gardens of the old Persian court. While thus ignobly holding back, the report gained currency at Al-Medain that Keis had been defeated and slain. An *émeute* ensued. The troops rose mutinously upon the Caliph. They rushed into his sumptuous pavilion, and plundered the royal tents even to the carpets. A project was set on foot to seize his person, and, by delivering him up to Mu'awiya, thus make favourable terms. The faint-hearted Caliph, alarmed at the outbreak, took refuge in the Palace of the Chosroes, a more congenial residence than the martial camp; and, trusting no longer to his fickle and disloyal people, sent letters of submission to Mu'awiya. He agreed to abdicate and retire to Medina,

on condition that he should retain the contents of the treasury of Al-Kūfa, five million pieces, in addition to the revenues of a Persian district; and that the imprecation against his father should drop from the public prayers. Mu'awiya granted the first request; as for the second, he consented that no prayer reviling 'Alī should be recited within hearing of the son. The truce was ratified accordingly. A.H. 40-41.

Ḥasan abdicates in favour of Mu'āwiya, 21 iii. 41 A.H. 26 July, 661 A.D.,

And so, after a brief and inglorious reign of five or six months, Al-Ḥasan, with his household and belongings, quitted Al-Kūfa for Arabia. The people wept at his departure. But Al-Ḥasan left them without regret. They were a race, he said, in whom no trust could be reposed, and who had set purpose neither for evil nor for good. and retires to Medīna.

Ḳeis, whose ability and prowess were worthy of a better cause, remained for some while longer in the field. At length, having obtained terms for all who had been fighting on the side of 'Alī, and there being no longer any master now to fight for, he laid down his arms and did homage to Mu'āwiya. Ḳeis submits.

Thus, at last, Mu'awiya was able to make triumphal entry into Al-Kūfa. Having there received the homage of the Eastern provinces, he returned to Syria sole and undisputed Caliph of Islām. The year is called the Year of Union (*jamā'a*). Damascus thenceforth was the capital of the Empire. Damascus capital of Islām.

The imprecations against the memory of 'Alī, his house, and his adherents, still formed part of the public service; and so, indeed, they continued to do throughout the Umeiyad Caliphate, except during the Caliphate of 'Omar. Continued imprecation against 'Alī.

The short-lived Caliph retired to Medīna, where, with ample means to gratify his ruling passion, he passed his time in ease and quietness, giving no further anxiety to Mu'awiya. He survived eight years, and met his death by poison at the hand of one of his wives. It was a not unnatural end for "Al-Ḥasan the Divorcer." 'Alid tradition, indeed, would have us to believe that the lady was bribed to commit the crime, and thus exalts the libertine to the dignity of "Martyr." But Mu'awiya had no object in ridding himself of his harmless subject; and the jealousies of Al-Ḥasan's ever-changing *ḥarīm* afford a sufficient and a likelier reason. Of his brother Al-Ḥosein there will be more to tell. Ḥasan poisoned by his wife.

CHAPTER XLV

MU'ĀWIYA

40-60 A.H. 661-680 A.D.

Mu'āwiya's reign, 40-60 A.H. 661-680 A.D.

FROM the death of 'Othmān, 35 A.H., Mu'āwiya was independent ruler of the West; and from Al-Ḥasan's abdication till his own death, that is, for nearly twenty years, he was undisputed Caliph of all Islām. During this long reign there was prosperity and peace as a rule at home, disturbed only by intermittent outbursts of Khāriji zealots, and by factions still ardent for the house of 'Ali, supported by old-fashioned Muslims who nicknamed the Umeiyads Ṭulaḳa (forced converts). Both were easily suppressed, though not without bloodshed, by the strong arm of the Caliph and his able lieutenants. Abroad his rule was equally successful, and extended the boundaries of Islām in all directions.

'Amr. His death, 43 A.H.

'Amr held the government of Egypt during the rest of his long life, which, indeed, had been one of the most eventful in this history. No man influenced more than he the fortunes of the Caliphate. Brave in the field, astute in counsel, coarse and unscrupulous in word and deed, it was mainly to 'Amr that Mu'awiya owed his ascendency over 'Ali, and the eventual establishment of the Umeiyad dynasty. Conqueror of Egypt, and for four years its governor under 'Omar, he continued in the same post a like period under 'Othman, who by his recall made him in an evil hour his enemy. Finally reappointed by Mu'āwiya on the defeat of Mohammad, he was still at his death the governor of Egypt. He died seventy-three years of age, penitent, we are told, for his many misdeeds.

The career of Al-Moghira, though less brilliant, was not

less singular. A native of Aṭ-Ṭāif, he had been deputed by the Prophet, in company with Abu-Sufyān, to hew down the tutelary idol of that city.[1] He was ill-favoured, being one-eyed with red hair dyed black. Clever, designing, and shameless, he survived his disgraceful fall at Al-Baṣra which nearly cost him life as well as his reputation, and rose again to influence. Finally, appointed by Mu'āwiya to that most difficult post, the government of the no longer regal Kūfa, he held under strict control the turbulent and restless city, still the frequent scene of theocratic outburst, and of those dangerous conspiracies in favour of the house of 'Ali which began soon to disturb the Umeiyad dynasty.

A.H. 40-6c.

Moghīra governor of Kūfa.

But perhaps the greatest service which Al-Moghira rendered to Mu'āwiya, was that he succeeded in reconciling Ziyād to his sovereign. The history of Ziyād is one of the most remarkable of the time. He was the reputed son of Abu Sufyan, who fell in with his mother, then a vagrant bondwoman, before his conversion at Aṭ-Ṭaif. By the faithful discharge of important trusts, Ziyād overcame the disadvantage of servile birth, rose to important office, and eventually was appointed by 'Ali to the government of Al-Baṣra and Iṣṭakhr. Powerful, wise, and eloquent, he was by far the ablest statesman of the day. Devoted to the cause of 'Ali, he was bitterly opposed to the pretensions of Mu-'awiya, even after the abdication of Al-Ḥasan. Called by Mu'awiya to render an account of his stewardship in Persia, he refused to do so or to appear at Court even when threatened, if he continued to absent himself, with the execution of his sons in Al-Baṣra. A thorn in his side, he caused continual alarm to Mu'awiya. At last, in the year 42 A.H., Al-Moghira, who had not forgotten the occasion on which he owed his life to the partial evidence of Ziyad,[2] repaired to Iṣṭakhr, and persuaded him to tender his submission. Under safe-conduct he appeared before the Caliph at Damascus, and as a royal gift, together with his arrear of revenue, presented a million pieces. He was dismissed with honour, and provided with a residence in Al-Kufa. The figure of Mu'awiya is in the annals quite eclipsed by those of his lieutenants Al-Moghira and Ziyad,

Ziyād reconciled to Mu'āwiya, 42 A.H. 662 A.D.

[1] In 9 A.H., *Life of Mohammad*, p. 451.

[2] Above, p. 178.

A.H. 40-60.

just as that of 'Abd al-Melik is by that of Al-Ḥajjāj. It is to be remarked that all three belonged to the tribe of Thakīf in At-Ṭā'if; we shall meet other members of it who became eminent. The relations between this tribe and the house of Umeiya were of old standing.

Ziyād acknowledged as brother by Mu'āwiya, 45 A.H. 665 A.D.

A year or two afterwards a curious episode in his life disturbed the equanimity of the Muslim world. As Ziyād grew daily in royal favour, Mu'āwiya was seized with the desire to remove the stain upon his descent, and thus prove him not the suppositious, but the real and legitimate son of Abū Sufyān his own father. A commission appointed for the purpose held this established; upon which Mu'āwiya publicly acknowledged Ziyād to be his brother. The announcement raised a scandal throughout Islām, first as contravening the law of legitimacy, and still more as making Umm Ḥabība—also the child of Abū Sufyān and one of the "Mothers of the Faithful"—to be the sister of what (the above decision notwithstanding) was held to be an adulterous issue. Not only so, but Mu'āwiya's own kinsfolk, the house of Umeiya, were displeased at the affront thus put upon the purity of their blood. The feeling, however, soon passed away, as it was seen that a pillar of strength had been gained for the Umeiyad dynasty.[1]

Appointed governor of Baṣra, iv. or v. 45 A.H. July, 665 A.D.;

Shortly after, Ziyād was made governor of Al-Baṣra in addition to his Persian command. In Al-Kūfa religious strife did not interfere with the public safety, but in Al-Baṣra, under the feeble administration of Ibn 'Āmir, there was now no longer any security for life or property. Ziyād's strong hand fell heavily on the restless population of the

[1] When Ziyād proposed to go on pilgrimage to Mecca, his brother (who, offended at his tergiversation in the case for adultery against Al-Moghīra above, p. 178, had never spoken to him since) sent a message to dissuade him: "Thou wilt meet Umm Ḥabība," he said, "if thou goest on pilgrimage. Now, if she receive thee as her brother, that will be regarded as a slight upon the Prophet; if otherwise, it will be a slight upon thyself." So Ziyād gave up the design. Again, Ziyād, wishing to secure an acknowledgment of legal birth from 'Ā'isha, addressed to her a letter in which he subscribed himself, *Ziyād, son of Abū Sufyān;* to which she replied, without committing herself, "To my dear son Ziyād." 'Abbāsid writers name him without any patronymic, "Ziyād, *son of his father*." He is also called after his *mother*, "Ziyād ibn Sumeiya."

turbulent city, now patrolled incessantly by an armed police of a thousand men. None might venture abroad at night on pain of death; and so ruthless was the order, that an unlucky Arab, wandering unawares into the precincts, was executed for the involuntary offence. His best friends were the Azd, especially those lately arrived from 'Omān, and he did not forget their services. The supremacy of law, an experience new to Al-Baṣra, repressed rebellion, and effectually enforced order where strife and faction had heretofore prevailed. A.H. 40-60.

On Al-Moghīra's death, he was elevated to the governorship of Al-Kufa also, and his habit was to spend half the year there and half at Al-Baṣra. A reign of terror now began. At the first address of his representative in the Mosque of Al-Kūfa, stones were cast at him. Ziyād came from Al-Baṣra. To discover the offenders, all present were put to the oath, and some fifty men who refused to swear had their hands cut off. The 'Alid faction which reviled 'Othman abounded in both cities, and strong measures were no doubt needful to repress conspiracy; but cruelty and bloodshed went far beyond the bounds of need. Tales abound of parties refusing to curse the memory of 'Alī—one especially, headed by the grandson of the famous Ḥātim of the tribe of Ṭai'[1]—being ruthlessly beheaded; and the tyranny thus inaugurated by Ziyād casts a dark stain upon his memory. The gravel in the Mosque was replaced by a pavement, and the clan system in the army was broken up. and of Kūfa, 50 or 51 A.H. His severe administration,

From Iṣṭakhr, Ziyad brought with him the pride of an Oriental court. Abroad he was followed by a crowd of silver-sticks and lictors, and at his gate 500 soldiers mounted guard. He was the most powerful lieutenant the Caliphate yet had seen. The entire East was subject to him. From the Oxus and the Indus to the Persian Gulf his sway was absolute.[2] His sons held important commands in Khorasan and the frontier; but the most famous, or infamous, of them was 'Obeidallah, who became governor of Al-Baṣra. One of these carried with him 50,000 citizens of Al-Kufa, whom by a wise policy he and splendid Court.

[1] *Life of Mohammad*, p. 436.

[2] He divided the East into four commands, Tab. ii. 79. *Cf.* p. 395 below; also Le Strange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, p 382.

A.H. 40-60.

planted in Khorasan with their wives and families. Ziyad did not long enjoy the splendid position he had thus achieved. Not satisfied with the East, he coveted also charge of the Hijaz with its Holy Cities. The inhabitants in terror prayed to the Lord that he might not have it; and so (says our annalist) his hand was smitten with a malignant boil, of which he died in the year 53 (summer of 673 A.D.), at the age of fifty-eight.

His death, 53 A.H. 673 A.D.

Progress in the East.

Great progress was made by Mu'awiya in extending his rule eastward. The conquered peoples and their chiefs, impatient of the tribute and restraints of Islam, were continually casting off their allegiance; but the yoke was yearly becoming more secure. Herat, having rebelled, was stormed, 41 A.H.; and two years later Kabul also was besieged for several months, and taken after the walls had been breached by catapults. Similar operations are noticed against Ghazna, Balkh, Kandahar, and other strongholds. In the year 54 A.H., one of Ziyad's sons, crossing the Oxus and mountain range on camels, took Bokhara; and two years later a son of Othman beat back the Turkish hordes and gained possession of Samarkand and Tirmidh. The territories in the far north and east continued long on a precarious tenure; but in the south all the country up to the banks of the Indus was gradually being consolidated under Mohammadan rule or suzerainty.

Africa.

The experience of Africa along its northern shore did not materially differ from that of the East, for the Berbers were ever and anon rebelling after they had tendered their submission. Indeed, the struggle was harder here, for the Roman settlements enabled the native population to offer a more stubborn resistance. And yet, in the end, the overthrow was not less complete, so that the bright seats of civilisation and of the Christian faith were soon known only by the ruins of their temples, aqueducts, and civic buildings. 'Okba, appointed by 'Amr, 41 A.H., waged war against the Berbers, and for several years the littoral was ravaged as far as Barka and Waddan. In the year 50, strengthened by Mu'awiya with a body of 10,000 Arabs, he founded the settlement of Kairawan, to the south of Tunis, as the African capital, and strongly fortified it against the Berbers. Ever since, it has been regarded as a sacred centre.

'Okba founds Kairawan, 50 A.H. 670 A.D.

A.H. 40-60.

Tradition tells us of the miraculous flight of wild beasts and reptiles with their young from its site at the conqueror's prayer; and also that the Berbers, convinced by the prodigy, at once accepted Islām and settled themselves upon the spot. But a few years later 'Oḳba was surprised by a joint Roman and Berber army, and miserably perished with his whole army.[1] The Muslims were driven back on Barḳa.

Is defeated and slain.

Hostilities with Greece.

On the side of Armenia and Greece, hostilities, suspended during the contest with 'Alī, were resumed by Mu'awiya at its close, and we read of a serious defeat sustained by the Greeks, 42 A.H. The Muslim army wintered in Armenia, and the campaign was prosecuted both by sea and land. In 50 A.H. a formidable expedition was directed against Constantinople. The army suffered severely from want of provisions, and sickness; and Mu'āwiya sent his pleasure-loving son Yezid, much against his will, to join the army with large reinforcements. The force landed near Constantinople, the safety of which is ascribed by some to the use of Greek fire, discovered about the time. There was much fighting, and the Muslim loss was heavy. But misfortune notwithstanding, efforts against the city were not abandoned. We read of almost yearly expeditions, and in 53 A.H., the island of Cyzicus near Constantinople was seized and held by a Muslim garrison for seven years; but the position was abandoned by Yezid on his father's death.

Attack on Constantinople.

Death of Abu Eiyūb and other Companions; also of 'Aisha and widows of Moḥammad.

In the Grecian campaign a famous Companion, Abu Eiyub, was killed under the walls of Constantinople, where his tomb was tended and visited by pilgrims for ages. He was the same who entertained the Prophet in his house for the first half-year after his arrival at Medina.[2] Early memories are also recalled by the death of Al-Arḳam, whose abode—thence called "the house of Islam"—was the resort of Moḥammad and his followers when he first began his teaching at Mecca.[3] About the same time also we read of the death of 'Āisha, nearly seventy years of age, and of four other of the "Mothers of the Faithful," also advanced in years.[4]

[1] See p. 341.
[2] *Life of Moḥammad*, p, 170 f.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 63, 91.
[4] Ṣafiya, Juweiriya, Um Salama, and Um Ḥabība.

A.H. 40-60.

A son of Khalid poisoned.

Suspicion rests on the name of Mu'awiya of compassing the death of 'Abd ar-Rahmān, son of the great Khalid. The splendour of his father's memory, and his own success in the campaign against the Greeks, invested him with such distinction throughout Syria, as to arouse the fears and jealousy of Mu'awiya, who employed (it is said) his Christian physician to poison him. The deed embittered the Makhzūm, to which tribe, formerly the most important in Mecca, Khalid belonged; for they were already alienated from the Umeiyads who had supplanted them, and were supporters of Az-Zubeir. It is rare to find an imputation of the kind against Mu'awiya, who though backward in checking the cruelty of his lieutenants, was himself on the whole mild and just in his administration. De Goeje, however, rejects the whole story.

Project of carrying Mohammad's pulpit to Damascus.

In the 50th year of the Hijra, Mu'awiya entertained the project of removing the pulpit and staff of the Prophet from Medina to Damascus, now the capital of Islām. But the impious project was, by divine interposition, checked. For, "on its being touched, the pulpit trembled fearfully, and the sun was darkened, so that the very stars shone forth, and the men were terrified at the prodigies." The fond tradition is significant of the superstitious regard in which everything connected with the Prophet's person was now held. Mu'awiya was dissuaded from his design by the consideration urged upon him, that where the Prophet had placed his pulpit and his staff, there they should remain. And so they were left as relics in the Great Mosque hard by the last home of Mohammad.

Features of reign.

Syria was, of course, the capital province of the Umeiyad Empire, as with Egypt, it was first in culture and social and political standing. The Arabs of the northern part were mostly Keisites, of the southern, Kelbites. Mu'awiya was more nearly related to the former, but he made the son of his Kelbite wife his heir; and so held with both. Through the constant wars with the Greeks, the Syrians were also superior in military affairs. These conquerors and conquered lived on friendly terms, sharing the same cities and towns and even churches; whereas, in Al-'Irak, Al-Kūfa and Al-Baṣra were two military colonies in the midst of a hostile

indigenous population. The Christians of Syria were at least as well off under Mu'āwiya as they had been under Heraclius. One of his chief advisers was a Christian: he rebuilt the church of Edessa, which had been destroyed by an earthquake; and Jacobites and Maronites brought their disputes to him to be settled. A.H. 40-60.

CHAPTER XLVI

YEZÎD APPOINTED HEIR-APPARENT. HEREDITARY NOMINATION BECOMES A PRECEDENT

56 A.H. 676 A.D.

Precedents for nomination or election of Caliph.

THE election of a Caliph on each succession had been followed by serious peril to the peace of Islam. The choice was supposed to be a privilege vested in the inhabitants of Medina, "Citizens," as well as "Refugees"; but the practice had been various, and the rule had been oftener broken than observed. The Prophet himself nominated no one. Abu Bekr we may say was chosen by acclamation.[1] He again, on his deathbed, named 'Omar successor; and 'Omar, establishing yet another precedent, placed the choice in the hands of electors. It is true that on both these last occasions the succession was ratified by the homage of Medina; but that was little more than formal recognition of appointment already made. At the fourth succession, the election of 'Ali, though carried out under compulsion of the regicides, resembled somewhat the popular election of the first Caliph. Then followed the rebellion of Talha and Az-Zubeir, based on the allegation that homage had been extorted from them. After that ensued the struggle between Mu'awiya and 'Ali, which ended in the so-called Arbitration of Duma, and the double Caliphate. On the death of 'Ali, who declined to nominate a successor, his son Al-Hasan was elected, not, as heretofore, by the people of Medina, but by the citizens of Al-Kufa. And, finally, we have the first

[1] Mohammad, as we have seen, appointed him on his deathbed to lead the prayers; but he made no express nomination.

example of abdication, when Al-Ḥasan resigned his rights into the hands of Mu'awiya, and left him sole Khalifa, or Successor, of Moḥammad. A.H. 56.

Whatever rights Medīna may originally have possessed, circumstances had now materially altered the means of exercising them. Abandoned as the seat of government, Medīna had practically lost the privilege of choosing a successor to the throne, or even of confirming the nomination made by others. Succession, as in the case of Al-Ḥasan, followed necessarily, and at once, upon the death of the reigning Caliph, and Medīna had now no choice but to acquiesce in what had already taken place elsewhere. The elective function was thus, from the course of events, transferred to the inhabitants of the seat of government, wheresoever that might be. Initiative no longer possible at Medīna.

Again, the troubles which followed the election of 'Alī might recur at any moment. Az-Zubeir and Ṭalḥa raised the standard of revolt on the plea of compulsion, while between 'Alī and Mu'awiya there followed a long and doubtful contest. These internecine struggles had imperilled the fortunes of Islām. Not only had the ranks of the Faithful been seriously thinned, but, from without, enemies might have taken dangerous advantage of the strife; as indeed would have been the case in the contest between 'Alī and Mu'āwiya, had the latter not made a truce with the Byzantine Court while civil war impended. But if a similar opportunity again offered, the foes of Islām might not be so forbearing, and a fatal wound might be inflicted on an empire torn by intestine conflict. Danger at each succession.

Influenced by such considerations, and also no doubt by the desire of maintaining the Caliphate in his own line, Mu'āwiya entertained the project of declaring his son, Yezīd, to be his heir-apparent. By securing thus an oath of fealty throughout the Muslim world, he would anticipate and prevent the peril of a contested election. Ziyād was favourable to the scheme, but enjoined deliberation, and a cautious canvass throughout the provinces. He also counselled Yezīd, who was devoted to the chase and careless of public affairs, to amend his ways in preparation for the throne, and show before the people a character more fitted for the higher dignity in prospect. Al-Moghīra like- Mu'āwiya's design to nominate his son.

A.H. 56.

wise was favourable to the project. But it was not till both these counsellors had passed away that Mu'awiya found himself in a position to proceed with the design.

Yezid declared heir-apparent, 56 A.H. 676 A.D.

So soon as Mu'awiya felt sure of adequate support, and especially that Medina would not resent the invasion of her elective privilege,[1] deputations from all the provinces and chief cities presented themselves at Damascus. These, received in state, affected to press the nomination; and accordingly, without further ceremony, the oath of allegiance was taken by all present to Yezid as the next successor. Syria and Al-'Irak having without demur tendered homage, Mu'awiya set out for Mecca with a retinue of 1000 horse, ostensibly to perform the lesser pilgrimage, but in reality to obtain the assent of the two Holy Cities to the succession of Yezid. The leading dissentients at Medina were Al-Hosein, son of 'Ali, 'Abd ar-Rahman, son of Abu Bekr, and the two 'Abdallahs, sons of 'Omar and Az-Zubeir. Mu'awiya on entering the city received them roughly, and so, to avoid further mortification, these left at once for Mecca. The remainder of the citizens consented to the nomination of Yezid, and took the oath accordingly. Continuing his journey to Mecca, the Caliph carried himself blandly towards its people for the first few days, which were occupied with the rights of the lesser pilgrimage. But as his time of departure drew nigh, he stood up to address them on his errand, and though his speech was gilded with assurances that the rights and privileges of the city would be respected, there was at the first no response. Then 'Abdallah, son of Az-Zubeir, stood up, and declared that the recognition of an heir-apparent would run counter to all the precedents of Islam. On this the Caliph urged the risks to which Islam was

Mecca and Medina forced to swear allegiance.

[1] When Merwan, governor of the City, placed the matter before the men of Medina, he was at first violently opposed. Amongst others, 'Abd ar Rahman, son of Abu Bekr, said, "This thing is naught but fraud and deception. In place of election, the right to which vesteth in this City, ye will now make the succession like unto that of the Greeks and Romans - where one Heraclius succeedeth another Heraclius." On this, Merwan quoted from the Koran: "Say not unto your parents, *Fie on you!* neither reproach them" (Sura xvii. 24); signifying, it may be, that the very practice of nomination, now opposed, had been introduced by Abu Bekr himself in appointing 'Omar. 'Abdallah, son of 'Omar, is said to have been gained over by the gift of ten thousand golden pieces.

ever and anon exposed from a contested succession. Others then spoke thus:—"We consent," they said, "to any one of these three things. *First*, do as the Prophet did, and leave the election to the citizens of Medina. Or, *secondly*, do as Abu Bekr did, and nominate a successor from amongst Koreish.[1] Or, *thirdly*, like 'Omar, appoint electors who shall, from amongst themselves, choose a candidate to succeed thee. Only, like them, thou must exclude thine own sons and thy father's sons." "As for the first course," replied Mu'āwiya, "there is none now left like unto Abu Bekr, that the people might choose him. And for the rest, verily I fear the contention and bloodshed that would follow if the succession be not fixed aforehand." Then finding his arguments of no effect, he called out the bodyguard, and at the point of the sword caused the city to take the oath. A.H. 56.

Mu'āwiya's action becomes the received precedent of Islām.

The example of Syria, Al-'Irāḳ, and the Holy Cities was followed throughout the Empire without reserve. And ever after, the precedent more or less prevailed. The fiction of an elective right vested in the whole body of the Faithful, though still observed more or less in form, ceased now to have reality, and the oath of allegiance was without hesitation enforced by the sword against recusants. The reigning Caliph thus proclaimed as his successor the fittest of his sons, the one born of the noblest mother, or otherwise most favoured, or (in default of issue) the best qualified amongst his kinsmen. To him, as heir-apparent, an anticipatory oath of fealty was taken, first at the seat of government and then throughout the Empire, and the succession followed as a rule the choice. Sometimes a double nomination was made, anticipating at once thus two successions: but such attempt to forestall the distant future too often provoked, instead of preventing, civil war. The practice thus begun by the Umeiyads was followed equally by the 'Abbasids, and proved a precedent even for later times.

Yezīd and his mother.

Mu'āwiya had other sons, but Yezīd's mother, Meisūn,

[1] That the Caliph must be of Koreish stock was axiomatic, excepting with the Khawārij, who denounced all privilege. The stricter Khawārij held that there should be no Caliph, but only a Council of State. If there were a Caliph, they were indifferent as to what stock he came from.

A.H. 56. was of noble birth, and as such her son took precedence.[1] The story of this lady has special attraction for the early Arab writers. Amid the courtly luxuries of Damascus, she pined for the freedom of the Desert, and gave vent to her longing in verse, of which the following famous and often translated lines may be taken as a specimen:—

"The tent fanned by desert breeze is dearer to me than these lofty towers.
I should ride more joyously on the young camel than on the richly caparisoned steed.
The wild blast over the sandy plain is sweeter far to me than flourish of royal trumpets.
A crust in the shade of the Bedawi tent hath better relish than these courtly viands.
The noble Arab of my tribe is more comely in my sight than the obese and bearded men around me.
O that I were once again in my desert home! I would not exchange it for all these gorgeous halls."

The lady's verses, coming to Mu'awiya's ears, displeased him. Like 'Ali, he had become from luxurious living obese and portly, and felt the taunt of his wife aimed at himself. So he dismissed Yezid with his mother to the tents of her tribe, the Beni Kelb, where in boyhood he acquired his Bedawi taste for the chase and a roving life.

[1] By Mohammadan law, the son of the bondwoman is equally legitimate with the son of the free. But the Arab sentiment of noble birth prevailed; and it still prevails, as we daily see in such minor principalities as Afghanistan.

CHAPTER XLVII

DEATH OF MU'ĀWIYA. YEZĪD SUCCEEDS. AL-ḤOSEIN AND IBN AZ-ZUBEIR. TRAGEDY OF KERBALĀ. DEATH OF AL-ḤOSEIN

60-61 A.H. 680 A.D.

Death of Mu'awiya, vii. 60 A.H. April, 680 A.D.

AFTER a long and prosperous reign, Mu'awiya died about seventy-five years of age. As he felt the end approach, he brought forth a casket, carefully kept, with parings of the Prophet's nails. Of these, ground fine, he bade them sprinkle the powder in his eyes and mouth when dead, and bury him, for a winding-sheet, in a garment given to him by Mohammad. Fortune had favoured his protracted rule. Since the abdication of Al-Ḥasan, there had been peace throughout the Empire. Wise, courageous,[1] and forbearing, he held the dangerous elements around him in check; consolidated and extended the already vast area of Islam; and nursed commerce and the arts of peace, so that they greatly flourished in his time. The secret of his success probably lay in the fact that he always took the offensive. All through his Caliphate he waged unremitting war against the Emperor. Domestic affairs he left to his stadtholders. But he looked to the future with anxiety.

[1] His courage, however, was moral rather than physical. Both he and 'Ali, as already stated, had become obese (at Al-Kufa, 'Ali went by the nickname of "the pot-bellied"), and in their later years there was little occasion for active bodily exertion. Still, even as late as Ṣiffin, we have seen that 'Ali fought with his early gallantry; while Mu'awiya shrank from a personal encounter. 'Ali was, without doubt, the braver of the two in physical courage; but Mu'awiya, beyond comparison, the abler and bolder ruler. Mu'āwiya was a politician rather than a soldier. He preferred to gain his end by money rather than by force. And he is a fine example of *l'homme qui sait attendre.*

A.H. 60-61.

The nomination of Yezid as successor was sure to meet with opposition when he was gone. From his deathbed, therefore, he sent a message to Yezid, who was absent at his hunting-place, warning him of the rocks that lay ahead. There were three, he said, of whom he must beware—the two 'Abdallahs, sons of 'Omar and Az-Zubeir, and Al-Hosein son of 'Ali. The first, a pious devotee, would easily be put aside. "As for Al-Hosein," he continued, "the restless men of Al-'Irák will give him no peace till he attempt the Empire; when thou hast gotten the victory, deal gently with him, for truly the blood of the Prophet runneth in his veins. It is 'Abdallah son of Az-Zubeir that I fear the most for thee. Fierce as the lion, crafty as the fox, destroy him root and branch."

Dying caution to Yezid.

Three men to beware of.

The first care of Yezid on assuming the Caliphate—the date was 1 vii. 60 A.H., April 7, 680 A.D.—was to require those who had before refused to swear allegiance at Medina, now to take the oath, the order being written on a leaf no larger than a mouse's ear. Two of these, the sons of 'Omar and Al-'Abbas,[1] complied with the command. But the sons of Az-Zubeir and Al-Hosein, both feigning time for consideration, escaped to Mecca.

Hosein and 'Abdallah ibn Zubeir escape to Mecca.

Since its capture by Mohammad, no enemy had dared to go up against the Holy City; and there, inviolate as the doves that fluttered around the Temple, conspirators abusing the asylum were wont to plot against the Empire. As Mu'awiya had foreseen, 'Abdallah, the ambitious son of Az-Zubeir, aimed at the Caliphate; but so long as Al-Hosein survived he dissembled, professing to bow to the superior claims of the Prophet's grandson.

Ibn Zubeir dissembles.

At Al-Kufa, the house of 'Ali was still after a fashion popular. Al-Hasan, it is true, found little support during his short-lived Caliphate there; but the fond and fickle populace now turned eagerly to Al-Hosein his brother. Promises of support poured in upon him, if he would but appear at Al-Kufa and there claim regal rights. His friends at Mecca besought that he would not trust to the slippery missives of that factious city. But the son of Az-Zubeir, to be rid of his rival, fostered the design; and Al-Hosein,

Citizens of Kúfa invite Hosein thither.

[1] 'Abbas, uncle of the Prophet, and progenitor of the 'Abbasid dynasty.

yielding to his advice, in an evil hour was tempted to accept the call. His cousin, Muslim, was sent before to prepare the way for his approach.[1] The plot becoming known at court, Yezīd deputed 'Obeidallah, son of Ziyād, from Al-Baṣra (whose rule there was as stern as had been his father's), to take command at Al-Kūfa. On his arrival, search was made, and Muslim was discovered lurking under protection of Hani', a friend to the house of 'Alī. The populace, suddenly siding with the pretender, rose on 'Obeidallah, and besieging him in his castle, went near to turning the tables against him. The ebullition, however, soon subsided. 'Obeidallah regained the lead, and Muslim with his protector was put to death.

A.H. 60-61.

Muslim, sent in advance, is put to death at Kūfa, xii. 60 A.H. Sept., 680 A.D.

Meanwhile, towards the close of the year 60 A.H., on the first day of Pilgrimage—it was the same day on which Muslim was put to death—Al-Ḥosein, heedless of the remonstrances of faithful friends, started from Mecca with his family and a little band of devoted followers. He had already passed the desert, advancing upon Al-Kūfa, when tidings reached him of the fate of Muslim. He was staggered, for it might well have seemed a mad attempt to venture, with the ladies of his household, into that fickle city. It was yet possible to retrace his steps. But Muslim's brethren were clamorous that he should avenge his blood; and there was still the forlorn hope that those who had drawn Al-Ḥosein by their specious promises thither, would rally round his person so soon as he appeared. But each succeeding messenger was fraught with darker tidings. Al-Farazdaḳ, the poet, chanced to pass that way from Al-Kufa; all that he could say to his princely friend was,—*The heart of the city is with thee; but its sword against thee.* The Bedawīn, ever ready for a fray, had been swelling the little band to a considerable force; but now, seeing the cause hopeless, they drew off; and so Al-Ḥosein, already two or three weeks upon his journey, was left with nothing but his original following of some 30 horse and 40 foot.[2] A chieftain

Ḥosein sets out for Kūfa, 8 xii. 60 A.H. Sept. 10, 680 A.D.

[1] Muslim was son of 'Alī's brother 'Aḳīl. The actors in this melancholy chapter have become household names, words either of love or intensest hate, in the mouths of Muslims, especially of the Shī'a.

[2] The number varies; but none place it higher than 40 horse and 100 foot. Seventy heads were brought into Al-Kūfa, probably those of all the combatants. The rest were, no doubt, camp-followers, etc.

A.H. 60-61.

Met by Horr near Kufa, 1st Moharram, 61 A.H. Oct. 1, 680 A.D.

by the way besought him to divert his course towards the hills of Aja and Selma. "Where," said he, "in ten days' time, 20,000 lances of the Beni Tai' will rally round thee." "How can I," replied Al-Hosein, "surrounded as thou seest I am by women and children, turn aside with them into the desert? I must needs go forward." And so forward he went to his sad fate. They had not proceeded far when they were met by a troop of Kufan horse under an Arab chief of the tribe of Temim named Al-Horr, who courteously but firmly refused to let him pass. "My orders," he said, "are to bring thee to the Governor; but if thou will not go, then turn to the right hand, or turn to the left, as thou choosest, only the way back again to Mecca that thou mayest not take." So the little band, leaving Al-Kufa on the right, marched to the left, skirting the desert for a day or two along the western branch of the Euphrates. In so doing Al-Hosein had apparently no immediate object beyond avoiding attack from Al-Kufa. Al-Horr kept close by, and courteous communications still passed between them.

Stopped by 'Omar at Kerbala.

But it was dangerous to leave the pretender to hover about the city already excited by the affair of Muslim. So 'Obeidallah sent 'Omar son of Sa'd with 4000 horse and a second summons.[1] Thus arrested, Al-Hosein pitched his camp on the field of Kerbala on the river bank, five-and-twenty miles above Al-Kufa. At repeated interviews, Al-Hosein disclaimed hostilities, which indeed, with his slender following, and no prospect now of a rising in the city, were out of thought. He would submit, but only thus, he said:—"Suffer me to return to the place from whence I came; if not, then lead me to Yezid, the Caliph, at Damascus, and place my hand in his, that I may speak with him face to face; or, if thou wilt do neither of these things, then send me far away to the wars, where I shall fight, the Caliph's faithful soldier, against the enemies of Islam." But 'Obeidallah insisted upon unconditional submission; and,

[1] His father Sa'd was the hero of Al-Kadisya. The story goes that 'Obeidallah offered 'Omar the government of Ar-Rey on condition of bringing in Al-Hosein dead or alive. 'Omar wavered between duty to the grandson of the Prophet and the bribe. He yielded, and for mammon sold his soul. But all this, *cum grano;* for we find tradition now rising to fever heat.

A.H. 60-61.

Shamir sent to bring him to Kūfa, 8th Moḥarram.

to effect this without resort to arms, he ordered 'Omar to cut off access to the river, hoping that thirst might thus force surrender. But Al-Ḥosein, who feared the cruel tyrant 'Obeidallah worse than death, stood firm to his conditions. He even prevailed on 'Omar to urge that he might be sent direct to the Caliph's court. Well had it been for the Umeiyad house, if the prayer had been agreed to. But impatient of delay, 'Obeidallah sent instead a heartless creature called Shamir (name never uttered by Muslim lips without a shudder) to say that 'Omar must dally no longer with Al-Ḥosein, but, dead or alive, bring him in to Al-Kūfa; should 'Omar hesitate, Shamir was to supersede him in command.[1] Thus forced, 'Omar forthwith surrounded closely the little camp. Al-Ḥosein resolved to fight the battle to the bitter end. The scene that followed is still fresh in the believers' eye; and as often as the fatal day comes round, the 10th of the first month, it is commemorated with the wildest grief and frenzy. Encircled with harrowing detail, it never fails to rouse horror and indignation to the utmost pitch. The fond believer forgets that Al-Ḥosein, leader of the band, having broken his allegiance, and yielded himself to a treasonable, though impotent, design upon the throne, was committing an offence that endangered society, and demanded swift suppression. He can see nought but the cruel and ruthless hand that slew with few exceptions all in whose veins flowed their Prophet's sacred blood. And, in truth, the simple story needs no adventitious colouring to touch the heart.

[1] Shamir ibn Dhi'l-Jaushan is a name never pronounced by the pious Muslim but with ejaculatory curse. 'Obeidallah (so the story goes) was at first inclined to concede the prayer of Al-Ḥosein, as urged by 'Omar, for a safe-conduct to the Caliph at Damascus, when Shamir stepped forward, and said that 'Obeidallah, for the credit of his name, must insist on the pretender's surrender at discretion. So he obtained from 'Obeidallah a letter to 'Omar, threatening that if he failed to bring Al-Ḥosein in, Shamir should take the command, and also obtain the government of Ar-Reiy in his stead. The name is variously pronounced as Shamir, Shomar, or Shimr.

The whole of the sad tale becomes at this point so intensified, and so overlaid with 'Alid fiction, that it is impossible to believe a hundredth part of what the heated imagination of the Shi'a has invented. The names are all ranged, either on one side or on the other (especially with the Shī'a) as models of piety, or as demons of apostasy.

A.H. 60 61.

Hosein's preparations for defence, 9th Moharram.

Al-Hosein obtained a day's respite to send his kinsmen and family away. But one and all refused to leave him. The tents were then rudely staked together, and barricades of wood and reeds set round, a poor defence against the overwhelming foe. During the night, Zeinab overheard her brother's servant furbishing his sword and singing the while snatches of martial verse on the impending combat. Her heart sank at the thought; drawing her mantle around her, she stole into the dark to her brother's tent, and flinging herself upon him in wild grief, beat her breast and face, and fell into a swoon. Al-Hosein poured water on her temples; but it was little that he could do to comfort her. 'Ali, Al-Hosein's little son, lay sick of a fever, but they could find no drop of water to slake his parched lips. The women and children passed the night in wailing and in terror.

Attacked and with all his company slain, 10th Moharram, 61 A.H. Oct. 10, 680 A.D.

On the morning of the fatal 10th, Al-Hosein drew out his little band for battle. There was a parley; and again he offered to retire, or be led to the presence of the Caliph. Finding all in vain, he alighted from his camel; and, surrounded by his kinsmen, who stood firm for his defence, resolved to sell life dear. There was a moment of stillness. At length, one shot an arrow from the Kufan side, and amid the cries of the women and little ones, the unequal fight began. Arrows flew thick, and did their deadly work. Al-Kasim, the nephew of Al-Hosein, ten years of age, betrothed to his daughter Fatima, was early struck, and died in his uncle's arms. One after another the sons and brothers, nephews and cousins of Al-Hosein, fell before the shafts of the enemy. Some took shelter behind the camp. The reeds were set on fire, and the flames spreading to the tents added new horror to the scene. For long none dared attack Al-Hosein, and it was hoped he might even yet surrender. At last, driven by thirst, he sought the river bank. The enemy closed up, and he was cut off from his people. The "cursed" Shamir led the attack. Al-Hosein, struck by an arrow, fell to the ground, and the cavalry trampled on his corpse.

Not one of the band escaped. Fighting bravely, they left of the enemy more than their own number dead upon the field. Two sons of Al-Hosein perished early in the day; and at its close there lay amongst the dead six of his brothers, sons of 'Ali; two sons of his brother Al-Hasan; and six

others, descendants of Abu Ṭālib, 'Alī's father. The camp was plundered; but no indignity was offered to the survivors, mostly women and children, who were carried, together with the ghastly load of seventy trunkless heads, to 'Obeidallah's palace. A thrill of horror ran through the crowd when the gory head of the Prophet's grandson was cast at 'Obeidallah's feet. Hard hearts were melted. As the governor turned the head roughly over with his staff (though we must be slow to accept the tales of heartless insult multiplied by Shi'a hate), an aged voice was heard to cry: "Gently! It is the Prophet's grandson. By the Lord! I have seen these very lips kissed by the blessed mouth of Moḥammad." A.H. 60-61. Their heads taken to the governor.

The sister of Al-Ḥosein, his little son 'Alī al-Aṣghar (the younger), and two daughters, sole survivors of the Family, were treated by 'Obeidallah with respect, and sent, along with the head of the pretender, to Yezīd at Damascus. Whether sincerely, or to escape the execrations already heaped upon the actors in the tragedy, the Caliph disowned responsibility for the death of Al-Ḥosein, and reproached 'Obeidallah for the deed. The ladies and children were honourably received into the royal household, and sent eventually, with every comfort and consideration, to their Medina home. This destination, meant in kindness by Yezīd, turned out badly for the Umeiyad house. At Medina, their return caused a wild outburst of grief and lamentation. Everything around intensified the catastrophe. The deserted dwellings inhabited heretofore by the family and kinsmen of the Prophet, the widowed ladies, the orphaned little ones,—all added pathos to the cruel tale. That tale, heard yearly by groups of weeping pilgrims at the lips of the women and children who survived to tell it,—and coloured, as oft repeated, with fresh and growing horrors,—spread over the Empire. The tragic scene was repeated in every household, and bred pity for the lineage of 'Alī. It soon was seen that the zeal of 'Obeidallah to suppress the rebellion of Al-Ḥosein had overshot the mark. The claim of 'Alī's line to rule, heretofore unknown, or treated only with indifference, now struck deep into the heart of multitudes; and a cloud of indignation began to gather, which ere long burst upon the Dynasty which had caused the sacrilegious massacre. The tragedy of Kerbala decided

Ḥosein's family sent to Medina.

Reaction in favour of the house of 'Alī.

A.H. 60-61. not only the fate of the Caliphate, but of Mohammadan kingdoms long after the Caliphate had waned and disappeared. Who that in the East has seen the wild and passionate grief with which, at each recurring anniversary, the Muslims of every land spend the live-long night, beating their breasts and vociferating unweariedly the frantic cry—*Hasan Hosein! Hasan Hosein!*—in wailing cadence, can fail to recognise the fatal weapon, sharp and double-edged, which the Umeiyad dynasty had thus allowed to fall into the hands of bitter enemies?[1] 'Ali, the little son of Al-Hosein, introduces a new thread into the tangle of claimants for the headship of Islām. His mother was a daughter (it is said) of Yezdejird, the last of the Sasanids. He had, therefore, the support of the Persians, and is acknowledged by all the Shi'a as the fourth Imām, under the title Zain al-'Ābidīn ("Glory of the Devout").

Mourning for Hosein.

The Moharram.

[1] In this outburst the name of Al-Hasan is added to that of Al-Hosein, not only because the Shi'a hold him to have been entitled to the Caliphate (though he resigned it), but because he, too, is regarded as a martyr poisoned by his wife, at the instigation, they say, of Mu'āwiya, but (as we have seen) without any sufficient presumption.

The tragedy is yearly represented as a religious ceremony, especially by the Shi'a, in the "Passion Play," throughout which are interwoven, in a supernatural romance, the lives of the early worthies of Islām, ending with the pathetic tale of the martyr company of Kerbalā; while Abu Bekr, 'Omar, and 'Othmān are execrated as usurpers, and the whole Umeiyad crew, 'Obeidallah, Al-Hajjāj, etc., are held up to malediction.

CHAPTER XLVIII

REMAINDER OF YEZĪD'S REIGN. REBELLION OF IBN AZ-ZUBEIR

61-64 A.H. 680-683 A.D.

Danger from the 'Alid reaction.

YEZĪD soon felt the evil which the tragedy of Kerbalā had inflicted on the Umeiyad throne, and the rebound caused thereby in favour of the house of 'Alī. Al-Kūfa, with proverbial inconsistency, was now eager to espouse the cause of a Dynasty which, over and again, it had cast aside. The Khariji heresy, in ever-varying form, gained new impetus, especially at Al-Baṣra. Its adherents, repenting of their desertion of 'Alī after the battle of Ṣiffīn, and grieving at the fate of his family, entered into a covenant of revenge and of never-ceasing hostility against the Government. But it was from a different quarter that peril first assailed the Caliphate. It arose, as Mu'awiya had foreshadowed, from 'Abdallah Ibn az-Zubeir.

Ibn Zubeir affects the Caliphate, 61 A.H. 680 A.D.

He it was, who, to be rid of Al-Ḥosein, had encouraged the unfortunate prince in his desperate venture. No sooner did the sad story reach Arabia than Ibn az-Zubeir arose and harangued the citizens of Mecca with fierce invective against the ruling Power. Veiling his ambitious design, he described himself as a dove of the doves of the Holy House. But he soon showed his true colours, and before the end of the year commenced to canvass, though at first secretly, as claimant to the throne. On this reaching the ears of Yezid, he swore that the rebel should yet be brought to Damascus, bound by the neck. Repenting of the oath, though wishing formally to fulfil it and yet leave Ibn az-Zubeir a way of escape, he sent a deputation to Mecca with a silver chain, and a silken dress of honour to conceal it, and invited him

A.H. 61-64. so robed to come to court; but Ibn az-Zubeir scorned the offer and imprisoned the embassy. Its leader, a brother of his own named 'Amr, who was hostile to himself, he put to a terrible death.

Medina rebels, 62 A.H. 682 A.D.

Meanwhile, Medina was in a ferment. The crafty pretender, still feigning friendship with Yezid, advised him to send a milder governor there, as likely to conciliate the people. Accordingly, Yezid removed the governor and deputed in his place a young and inexperienced cousin of his own, 'Othmān ibn Mohammad, who in an evil hour despatched a company of his chief citizens to Damascus, hoping that they might there be won over by the gifts and promises of the Caliph. They returned munificently rewarded. But, accustomed as they had been to the frugal and pious habits of the Prophet's home, they were shocked at the profane behaviour and indulgent excesses of the Syrians; and brought back such an account of the luxury and ungodliness of the Court,—wine and music, singing men and singing women, cockfighting and hounds,—that the Caliph was at once denounced, and a rival sworn to in his room. After a final attempt on the part of Yezid to win them over, the Ansar of Medina under the leadership of 'Abdallah ibn Hanzala, threw off their allegiance, by each one casting off his mantle or shoe. The young governor was fain to fly; the Umeiyad party, 1000 strong, were put in durance, and only allowed to leave the city after swearing that they would not assist the enemy. To chastise these rebellious citizens, and thereafter proceed to Mecca against Ibn az-Zubeir, the Caliph despatched, under Muslim ibn 'Okba al-Murri (a Koreishite having declined), a column which, in a bloody battle, called the battle of the Harra, defeated the troops of Medina; and the unfortunate city was for three days given up to the licence and rapine of the Syrian army. After forcing the citizens, at the point of the sword, again to swear allegiance to Yezid, the force continued its march on Mecca under the command of Al-Hosein ibn Numeir as-Sakuni, Muslim having died on the way.

Is attacked and sacked, 25 xii. 63 A.H. Aug. 26, 683 A.D.

Siege of Mecca, i. 64 A.H. Sept., 683 A.D.

Ibn az-Zubeir had nothing effectual to oppose. He was indeed supported by the malcontent fugitives from Medina, and by the Khawārij who from all quarters flocked to the defence of the Holy House. People hardly believed that

even the most sacrilegious tyrant would have the hardihood to attack the sacred places. "Good heavens!" they cried, looking upwards, "will ye fall down upon us!"[1] And in like security Ibn az-Zubeir had probably been the less careful to prepare for his enemy's advance. Early in the year 64 A.H., going forth to oppose the Syrian army, he was driven back with loss. For two months the city was besieged and shot cast into it by the Syrians from the heights around. The Ka'ba caught fire and was burned to the ground.[2] And so the siege went on till the third month, when tidings came of the death of Yezīd, and thereupon hostilities ceased. So poor at the moment were the prospects of the Umeiyads under the weak son who succeeded Yezīd, that the Syrian general offered to swear allegiance to Ibn az-Zubeir as Caliph if he would but accompany him to Syria, where alone he had any chance of successful candidature. But he refused, preferring to remain and rebuild the sacred shrine. Though himself a warrior, and the son of one of the most renowned heroes in the Prophet's train, he went out no more into battle, but from his quiet retreat maintained, as rival Caliph, an acknowledged rule, as we shall see, in the troubled years that follow, over a large portion of the Muslim Empire.

A.H. 61-64.

City bombarded and Ka'ba destroyed, 3 iii. 64 A.H. Oct. 31, 683 A.D.

Yezīd died in his hunting castle at forty years of age, after a reign of three and a half years. The news took twenty-seven days to reach Mecca. In natural disposition he much resembles Charles II. of England. He is described as a dissipated Monarch, but though the patron of learning, and himself no mean poet, he is only remembered for his sacrilegious attack upon the Holy Cities and the family of Moḥammad.

Death of Yezīd, 14. iii. 64 A.H. Nov. 11, 683 A.D.

"He reigned," says Ibn at-Ṭiḳṭaḳa, "three years and six months; and in his first year he killed Al-Ḥoṣein son of 'Alī (on both of whom be peace!). In his second year he plundered

[1] The exclamation is attributed to 'Abd al-Melik, who with his father Merwān was sent as a deputation by Yezīd to Ibn az-Zubeir, and by him detained in durance; "and yet," adds the annalist, "this same 'Abd al-Melik, when Caliph, himself sent Al-Ḥajjāj to besiege the Holy City, cast shot at the Ka'ba, and slay Ibn az-Zubeir."

[2] The fire appears to have been kindled by the besieged, and even by Ibn az-Zubeir himself.

A.H. 61-64. Medina and sacked it for three days; and in his third year he raided the Ka'ba."

Islam stationary in his reign.

The accusations brought against him may be due to 'Abbasid enmity; he himself denied that he drank wine. No progress was made in this reign to extend Islām; on the contrary, as we have seen, there were serious disasters in North Africa.

CHAPTER XLIX

MU'ĀWIYA II., MERWĀN, AND 'ABD AL-MELIK, CALIPHS. REBELLION OF IBN AZ-ZUBEIR AND AL-MUKHTĀR

64-73 A.H. 683-692 A.D.

Short and feeble reign of Mu'āwiya II., iii. 64 A.H. Nov., 683 A.D.

YEZID'S early death was a misfortune to the Umeiyad rule. He was succeeded by his son Mu'awiya II., a weak and sickly youth, who survived but three months. He had the support of all the Syrians except those of Ḳeis, whose objection to him was that his mother and grandmother were of Kelb. His maternal granduncle, Ibn Bahdal, was ruler *de facto*, and the brother of the latter was governor of Ḳinnasrin, a province settled by Ḳeis. Ḳeis was, therefore, jealous of the large share of Kelb in the government. Anticipating his decease, Mu'awiya told the people from the pulpit that, like Abu Bekr, he would have appointed a successor, but there was none he saw of 'Omar's stamp; that like 'Omar he would have nominated electors, but neither so did he see any men fit for such a task; and accordingly that he left them to choose a successor for themselves. The short and feeble reign served but to relax the sinews of the Empire.

Ibn Zubeir's power extends, vii. 64 A.H. March, 684 A.D.

On his death, the Umeiyad counsels were divided, and various aspirants to the throne appeared. Ibn az-Zubeir, now the acknowledged Caliph at Mecca and Medina, succeeded during the next few months in being recognised ruler also over Egypt and the greater part of Syria. He was proclaimed in Al-Baṣra by a Temimite, and 'Obeidallah, who relied on the Azd and Bekr, was forced to flee. Al-Kūfa also went over to Ibn az-Zubeir. Persia was in the hands of the Khawarij. Syria, and only part even of that, remained under the government of Damascus.

Had Ibn az-Zubeir left his sanctuary for Syria, there is

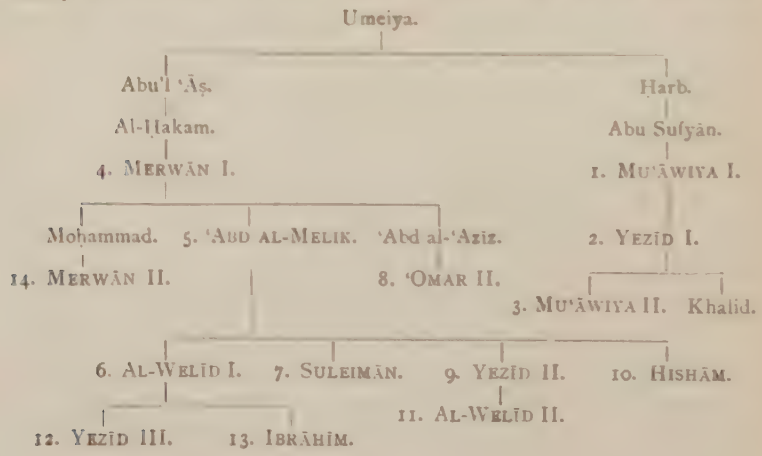
A.H. 64-73.

Merwan elected Caliph.

little doubt but that he would have succeeded, and the Caliphate might then have been established in his family. Even at Damascus, there was a numerous party in his favour, and most of the strongholds in Syria and Mesopotamia sided with him. Ibn Bahdal alone and the Syrian army, now returning from Arabia, were staunch to the Umeiyad interest, and they were reinforced by Umeiyads driven out of Medina. Ad-Dahhak, governor of Damascus, temporised. The young Caliph had left no child, but there was a brother, a younger son of Yezid, named Khalid. The family favoured him; but the chief men of the Court felt that a stronger hand was needed, and they put forward Merwan. An Umeiyad, he came from another branch, but had rendered devoted service to 'Othman and to the dynasty at large.[1] After much dissension, he was saluted Caliph, on condition that Khalid should succeed on reaching man's estate. Ad-Dahhak now showed his colours in the interest of Ibn az-Zubeir, and retired with his adherents to Merj Rahit, a meadow in the vicinity. Merwan, with a following of the Kelb of the Jordan province and the Ghassan, pitched at Al-Jabiya. A strong antagonism was growing up between the two Bedawi branches of the Arabs, the Yemeni or "southern," against the Beni Bekr and the "northern." The former, especially the Beni Kelb, from which the Caliphs had taken wives, were devoted to the Umeiyad house; the Beni

Opposed by Ibn Zubeir's party.

[1] The subjoined tree will show the relationship of the Umeiyad family:—



Ḳeis and northern tribes were equally prejudiced against it, and joined Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk on the side of Ibn az-Zubeir. Several months passed thus; at last, towards the close of the year, Merwān attacked his enemy at Merj Rāhiṭ, and after some weeks of fighting, completely discomfited him, Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥak being left dead upon the field. Thereupon all Syria returned to its allegiance. Egypt also was regained; and an army under Muṣ'ab, brother of Ibn az-Zubeir, seeking to recover Syria, was put to flight. Merwān owed his success to two persons, 'Obeidallah the son of Ziyād, who persuaded him to contest the Caliphate when he and all the Umeiyads believed their case was hopeless, and Ibn Bahdal, who held sway over the Yemeni tribes. On his side fought besides Kelb and Ghassān, Sakun, Sahsak, Tanūbh, Ṭai', and Ḳain. Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk was supported by Suleim, 'Āmir (Hawazin), and Dhubyān—all Ḳeis. The battle gave rise to a blood-feud between the Yemeni and Ḳeisi tribes, traces of which exist down to the present day.

A.H. 64-73.

Battle of Merj Rāhiṭ.

Allegiance had been sworn to Merwān on 3 xi. 64 A.H. (June 22, 684 A.D.) at Al-Jābiya, and after the battle the oath was renewed at Damascus, two months later; but in the midst of his success, he came to an ignoble and untimely end. Fearing the stability of his throne, he set aside the recognised arrangement by which Khālid, brother of the late Caliph, should succeed, in favour of his own son 'Abd al-Melik, whom he proclaimed heir-apparent. Then either with the view of reconciling Khālid's mother, that is, the widow of Yezid, or of weakening her son's claim, he took her himself to wife. Further, he made light of her son, and treated him with indignity. The proud Bedawi dame was offended and took a signal revenge. As the Caliph slept by her side, she smothered him with a pillow, so that he was found dead in his bed. Born at the beginning of the Muslim era, and now over threescore years of age, he had gained an unenviable notoriety as an unscrupulous agent of the faction of 'Othman, though his demerits have no doubt been magnified by the opposite party. His reign lasted barely a year. He was succeeded by his son 'Abd al-Melik, whose authority was at once recognised throughout Syria and Egypt.

End of 64 A.H. Merwān's death, 27 ix. 65 A.H. May 7, 685 A.D.

Succeeded by 'Abd al-Melik.

It may be useful for a moment to notice events transpiring in the East which illustrate the intense jealousy

A.H. 64-73. that reigned between the Southern and Northern divisions of the Arab race, often with serious injury to the State. About this time, the rivalry broke out in Persia into fierce internecine warfare. For a whole year, Ibn Khazim of Suleim, Ibn az-Zubeir's governor in Khorasan, fought on the part of the Modar (or "northern") branch against Bekr (allied to "southern"), and in a victory gained at Herat slew 8000 of his foes. His son having been killed by a party of the Temim tribe commanded by Al-Horeish, fighting was kept up for two years.

Hostilities in the East between Arabs of the South and North, 46-65 A.H.

In the following year, Ibn Khazim, still seeking to avenge his son's blood, stormed a fortress in which some eighty of the Beni Bekr had taken refuge. Marvellous tales are related of the feats and prowess of the little band; but their end was to be starved to death. Their chivalry has been handed down in verses by Al-Horeish, which are still preserved. Such are the scenes over which, both in prose and verse, the Arab loves to dwell; and too much prominence may perchance have been given to them by our annalists. But the tribal jealousies and bloody engagements long prevailing amongst the Arab bands in Khorasan and Eastern Persia, serve no doubt to explain why for many years there was so little progress made in the settlement of that territory, and in the extension of the frontier to the North and East.

Arab sympathy with such combats.

Meantime Keis still held its ground on the Euphrates, and on the restoration of peace in Syria, Merwan had despatched an army under 'Obeidallah to reoccupy Mesopotamia from Mosul downwards, and thereafter advance on Al-Kūfa. A second, intended to recover Medina, was routed on its way by the troops of Ibn az-Zubeir, whose supremacy continued to be recognised throughout Arabia, Al-'Irāk, and the East. His brave brother Mus'ab continued governor of Al-Baṣra, though exposed there to serious jeopardy from the Khawarij. These at the first rallied round Ibn az-Zubeir in defence of Mecca against the army of Yezid. But on his laying claim to the Caliphate, they demanded that he should join with them not only in condemning the "murderers" of Al-Hosein, but also in denouncing 'Othman as a tyrant justly put to death. This he could not do without compromising his whole career; for, in company with his father Az-Zubeir, he had waged war with 'Ali for the avowed purpose of avenging

Complications in Mesopotamia and Arabia.

the blood of that unfortunate Caliph. The theocrats, incensed at his refusal, now turned against Ibn az-Zubeir, whose brother Muṣ'ab had hard work in opposing them. Over and over again they got possession of Al-Baṣra, and when at last driven out they retired to Al-Ahwāz and spread themselves over Persia. There committing continual ravages under one name or another (for they split up into many sects), they were with difficulty held in check by Al-Muhallab, a brave general who had already distinguished himself in Khorasān, and was now summoned for this task by Muṣ'ab. A.H. 64-73. Khawārij fall out with Ibn Zubeir.

Meanwhile an adventurer of a very different type, named Al-Mukhtar, came on the scene at Al-Kūfa. He was son of the Abu 'Obeid slain in the battle of the Bridge, and belonged to the notorious tribe of Thakif. Designing and unprincipled, Al-Mukhtar was ever ready to take the side most for his own advantage. He was one of those who pursued Al-Ḥasan when, as Caliph, he fled from Al-Kūfa to Al-Medain; and, on the other hand, he took part with Muslim, when deputed by Al-Ḥosein to Al-Kūfa. On the last occasion, he was seized by 'Obeidallah, then governor of the city, who struck him a blow that cost him an eye. Escaping to Arabia, he swore that he would revenge the injury by cutting the tyrant's body into a thousand pieces. At Mecca he aided Ibn az-Zubeir in opposing the Syrian attack on the Holy City; but distrusted by him, he departed and set up on his own account. Towards the close of 64 A.H. he returned to Al-Kufa, now under one of Ibn az-Zubeir's lieutenants, and gained a name by joining in the cry of vengeance, raised by the 'Alid party, against all who had been concerned in the attack upon Al-Ḥosein. But, suspected by the governor of sinister designs, he was seized and cast into prison. Mukhtār at Kūfa. His previous history. Returns to Kūfa, end of 64 A.H. 684 A.D.

The civil war which now broke out was in reality a rising of the Persian Mawāli against their Arab masters, but it was given a religious colouring. For, about this time, a wild fanaticism had seized the Khawarij of Al-Kūfa, to revenge the death of Al-Ḥosein. Ever since the tragedy at Kerbalā, a party there had more or less conspired to slay all those who had joined the enemies of their Prophet's grandson. The feeling now became intense. Early in 65 A.H., numbers of "the Penitents" (Tauwabūn), as they called themselves, visited the tomb of Al-Ḥosein at Kerbalā, Khāriji rising at Kufa to revenge death of Hosein, 64 A.H. The Penitents.

A.H. 64-73. and gathering there "in a throng thicker than the throng that gathers around the Ka'ba," raised a bitter cry, and spent the night in a loud wail of self-reproach for having deserted in his extremity the son of Fatima and 'Ali. Then they set out to attack the godless Syrians. Met near Kirkisiya by the Caliph's troops, they fought with desperate bravery, but were utterly defeated, their leaders slain, and the remnant driven back to Al-Kūfa.[1]

Routed at Kirkisiyā, iv. 65 A.H. Nov., 684 A.D.

Al-Mukhtar from his prison sent to the defeated "Penitents" a fulsome panegyric with hopes of future victory. Having obtained his liberty, he set up as the professed delegate of Mohammad, Ibn al-Hanefiya, to execute vengeance on the enemies of his father's house. By dint of specious assertions, forged letters, and a certain countenance from Muhammad himself, then at Medina, he gained over Ibrahim ibn al-Ashtar[2] and other influential men of Al-Kufa. By their aid he expelled the governor of Ibn az-Zubeir, gained possession of the city, and succeeded in extending his sway over Al-'Irak, and even parts of Persia and Arabia.

Mukhtār gains possession of Kūfa as agent of the Hanefite, iii. 66 A.H. Oct., 685 A.D.

His first great effort was directed against his old enemy 'Obeidallah, who during the past year had been endeavouring to reduce the power of Ibn az-Zubeir in Mesopotamia, and now threatened Mosul. For this end Al-Mukhtar despatched Ibn al-Ashtar with an army; but no sooner had it left Al-Kufa, than the citizens, many of whom had no sympathy with the 'Alid movement, and were indeed themselves amongst the "murderers" of Al-Hosein, rose in rebellion against Al-Mukhtar. He hastily recalled Ibn al-Ashtar for his defence. A terrible conflict ensued in the streets of Al-Kufa, tribe against tribe, the Yemen against Keis, faction against faction, till the cry on one side "Down with the murderers of Al-Hosein!" on the other "Down with the murderers of 'Othman!" resounded throughout the city. At last, after some 800 had been slain, Al-Mukhtar's party

Mukhtar sends army against 'Obeidallah, 66 A.H. 686 A.D.

Uproar in Kūfa.

[1] The wild fanaticism of these people is illustrated by the war-cry of one who thus exhorted his fellows: "Whoso desireth the life after which there is no death, the journey after which there is no weariness, the joy after which there is no grief, let him draw nigh unto his Lord in this battle, and breathe out his soul in Paradise."

[2] Son of the Al-Ashtar who bore so prominent a part on 'Ali's side in the battle of Siffin.

gained the victory. An amnesty was called; but from it all who had taken part against Al-Ḥosein were shut out. These including,—besides Shamir, 'Omar, and other leading actors in the tragedy,—no fewer than 284 citizens of lesser note, were ruthlessly put to death. And so Al-Mukhtār at once achieved the ostensible object of his mission, and avenged himself by horrid cruelties upon his enemies.[1] The heads of 'Omar and his son, slain after he had given them quarter, were sent to Moḥammad Ibn al-Ḥanefiya, with this message,—"I have destroyed every man within my reach concerned in the attack upon Al-Ḥosein, thy martyred brother; and I will yet slay the remainder, if the Lord will." Only a few escaped to Al-Baṣra.

A.H. 64-73.

Massacre of all concerned in attack on Ḥosein. End of 66 A.H.

While *émeute* and slaughter were thus going on, 'Obeidallah had taken Mosul, and was advancing on Al-'Irāḳ. Al-Mukhtār, now that he was rid of his foes at home, hurried off the army under Ibn al-Ashtar to meet his arch-enemy. He himself accompanied it a short way, when a scene, worthy of the unprincipled pretender, was enacted to stir the fanatic zeal of the troops. A party of his followers drew near with a worn-out chair borne upon a mule. "The chair of 'Alī!" cried Al-Mukhtār; "*a messenger from heaven*[2] sent to slay thousands upon thousands of the wicked ones; even as the ark brought victory unto the children of Israel!" "Nay!" cried the pious Ibn al-Ashtar, as the crowds with uplifted arms shouted around the chair—"Call it rather the golden calf which led the Israelites astray." The wretched scandal thus countenanced by Al-Mukhtār tended to lower him in the eyes of all the thinking citizens. Meanwhile, with an immense force, 'Obeidallah was advancing from Mosul, and the Kufan army hurried on to anticipate him before he should invade Al-'Irāḳ. The two armies met on the banks of the Zab at the beginning of the year 67 A.H. But there

Ibn al-Ashtar defeats 'Obeidallah, who is slain, i. 67 A.H. Aug., 686 A.D.

Battle of the Zāb.

[1] "Some they stoned, some they stabbed, and some they shot with arrows like as they had shot Al-Ḥosein." Of one, Al-Mukhtār had the four limbs cut off, and the wretched creature so left to die; another half dead, they burned in the fire. The feeling ran so high as to override the ties of nature; thus the citizen who brought in from Kerbalā the head of Al-Ḥosein was hunted down till at last he was pointed out by the fanatic piety of his own wife, and slain.

[2] Quoting the Ḳor'ān, Sūra lxxvii. 1.

A.H. 64-73.

was treachery in the Syrian camp. The Beni Keis had not forgotten the field of Marj Rahit, and they carried the left wing in a body over to the enemy. Beaten at first by the other wing, Ibn al-Ashtar recovered his position; and in a furious charge, nerved by the cry of "vengeance on the tyrant 'Obeidallah and the murderers of Al-Hosein!" routed the Syrian force, of which the most that escaped the sword perished in the swift waters of the Zab. 'Obeidallah and Hosein ibn Numeir were among the slain. The head of 'Obeidallah was carried to Al-Kufa, and cast before Al-Mukhtar on the very spot where, six years before, as governor of Al-Kufa he had so roughly handled the gory head of the Prophet's grandson.[1] Thus early was the tragedy of Kerbala avenged in the blood of its chief actor, and of almost all who had taken part in it.

'Obeidallah's head sent to Kūfa.

Mukhtār falls out with Ibn az-Zubeir.

The victory of Ibn al-Ashtar revived the hopes of the Keis tribes; it also made Al-Mukhtar for the moment undisputed master of Mesopotamia. His fortune, however, built up on a sand-bed of false pretences, was but of short duration. He tried to hold with Ibn az-Zubeir; but Ibn az-Zubeir had no faith in him; and to test his profession of loyalty summoned him to Mecca. Al-Mukhtar, refusing, assumed a hostile attitude, and sent a force to succour Ibn al-Hanefiya, whose life Ibn az-Zubeir had threatened unless he would do him homage.[2] He also despatched an army to Medina with the ostensible object of defending it from Syrian attack; but Ibn az-Zubeir, divining his ambitious designs, sent a force in the same direction which cut it to pieces.

Mus'āb defeats Mukhtār, 67 A.H. 686 A.D.

Mus'ab, brother of Ibn az-Zubeir, was still governor of Al-Basra. Fortunately for 'Abd al-Melik his hands were full. The Kufans who had escaped thither from the tyranny of Al-Mukhtar, now besought Mus'ab to rid them of their adversary. Nothing loth, he summoned the brave Muhallab from Fars, where he was still fighting against the Khawarij; and, thus supported, some little time after the battle of the

[1] The feeling of abhorrence towards 'Obeidallah may be gathered from the tradition that a viper issued from his head and kept crawling from his mouth into his nose, and so backwards and forwards.

[2] Eventually Ibn al-Hanefiya tendered allegiance to 'Abd al Melik, and we hear little more of him.

Zāb, Muṣ'ab set out for Al-Kufa with a fully equipped army. He was met on the way by the troops of Al-Mukhtar, whom he totally discomfited. Al-Mukhtar then rallied his adherents in Al-Kūfa, and himself at their head encountered the enemy just outside the walls; but he was driven back, and with some 8000 followers, mostly Persians, forced to take refuge in the Fort. For several months they held out, but with little sympathy from the citizens at large. At last, driven by hunger and thirst, Al-Mukhtār called on the garrison to go forth with him and fight either for victory or a hero's death. He was followed but by nineteen, and with them met his fate. The rest surrendered at discretion. There was much discussion as to whether these should be spared, or at least those amongst them of Arab blood, who numbered 700.[1] But the army was incensed, and the citizens of Al-Kūfa had no favour for them; and so Muṣ'ab gave command, and the whole seven or eight thousand were beheaded. It was a deed of enormous ferocity, and brought Muṣ'ab into well-merited disfavour with his brother Ibn az-Zubeir. The hand of the pretender was nailed to the wall of the Mosque, where it remained till taken down by Al-Ḥajjaj; and the cruelties were crowned by putting to death one of the widows of Al-Mukhtar, who refused to speak otherwise than well of her husband's memory.[2] Thus ended the short-lived triumph of Al-Mukhtar, but a year and a half after his seizure of the city. The cause which he championed—that of the Mawali—seemed lost, but the fire quenched in blood in Al-Kūfa, where the Arabs were strong, broke out again in Khorasan sixty years later; and this time it was not put out.

A.H. 64-73.

Mukhtār slain, ix. 67 A.H. March, 687 A.D.

During the next two years there was little change in the relations subsisting between the several provinces. 'Abd al-Melik looked quietly on while Muṣ'ab made an end of Al-Mukhtar. The Khawarij kept the East in constant alarm. They scoured the country, made cruel

67-69 A.H. 687-688 A.D. Outbreak of Khawārij.

[1] It is instructive to observe the distinctive value at this period placed on the life of Arabs, when it was calmly proposed to set the Arab prisoners free and slay the "clients" of foreign blood.

[2] Elegies by different poets mark the horror at this atrocious act.

A.H. 64-73. attacks on the unoffending people,[1] took Ar-Reiy, besieged Ispahan for months, overran Al-Ahwaz and Kirman, and even threatened Al-Kufa. Al Muhallab, the only general able to cope with these savage fanatics, had been unwisely withdrawn from the field for the government of Mosul. Muṣ'ab now again sent him against the Khariji bands; and after eight months of unceasing warfare he succeeded in dispersing them for the time. The temporary quiet which, apart from these Khariji outrages, at this period prevailed throughout the Empire is signalised by the singular spectacle chronicled by tradition, that whereas the Meccan solemnities were always headed by the Sovereign himself or by his Lieutenant, there were in the year 68 A.H., four leaders who, without any breach of harmony, presided at the Pilgrimage, each over his own adherents,—namely Ibn az-Zubeir, Ibn al-Hanefiya, the Khariji Najda, who held the south of Arabia, and the representative of the Umeiyads. Yet no act of violence took place.

Pilgrimage xii. 68 A.H. June, 688 A.D.

Rebellion of 'Amr ibn Sa'id, 70 A.H. 689 A.D.

Now that the power of Al-Mukhtár and of the Khawárij had been broken for him, 'Abd al-Melik had for some time been contemplating operations against Ibn az-Zubeir, and had in fact started on more than one occasion for a campaign to commence in the north of Syria, and sweep down upon Al-'Irák and Arabia; but a severe famine paralysed his efforts for a time. At last, in the summer of 689 A.D. (69-70 A.H.) he set out against the Keis in Kirkisiya, but was recalled by a danger which threatened his throne, and led to an act which has left an indelible stigma on his name. At the time of Merwan's accession, it was stipulated that the minor son of Yezid should have the next claim. A similar expectation was held out, either then or afterwards, to 'Amr ibn Sa'id, cousin of the Caliph and governor of Damascus. Both expectations were defeated by the succession of 'Abd al-Melik, and the injury rankled in the mind of 'Amr ibn Sa'id. Accordingly, on the Caliph's camp nearing Aleppo, he left it secretly by night, re-entered Damascus, and set up for himself as Caliph. 'Abd al-Melik

[1] These theocratic fanatics seem throughout to have had a strange fascination for the most savage cruelties, regarding them apparently as service to God, if only perpetrated against those held by them as heretics. They even cut up women big with child.

hurried back, and after some inconclusive engagements offered an amnesty, on which the fighting ceased, and a deed of pardon was given to 'Amr. A few days after, the Caliph, who had resolved on his death, summoned him to his presence. He went against the advice of his friends, clad in armour below his dress, and with a large following, which, however, were shut out at the palace gates. Accosting him in friendly accents, 'Abd al-Melik bade him sit down by him, and after indifferent conversation, signified that he wished to fulfil an oath he made on first hearing of 'Amr's rebellion, namely, that he would bind him hand and foot; but that having fulfilled his oath he would afterwards unloose him. 'Amr submitted, but no sooner was he bound than the Caliph smote him violently, and having bid his brother 'Abd al-'Azīz put him to death, went forth to evening prayers. Returning shortly, he was startled to find his victim still alive; and, taunting his brother, who said he had not the heart to do the deed, with cowardice, himself stabbed 'Amr to death, and then cast his head with a heavy largess to the crowd without. 'Amr's followers were put to flight; his sons and adherents, with difficulty spared, were banished, and peace restored. The Caliph then sent to the widow for the deed of amnesty;—"It is in the grave with my husband," she replied, "that he may arraign thee before his Lord thereby." 'Abd al-Melik was not otherwise a cruel or hard-hearted man; but this act of refined and ruthless treachery created a widespread impression against him at the moment.[1]

A.H. 64-73. Treacherously slain by 'Abd al-Melik.

Secure in Syria, 'Abd al-Melik, apparently for the third time, renewed his design against Ibn az-Zubeir and Muṣ'ab. There was a strong party in the Caliph's favour at Al-Baṣra; but endeavour through an emissary to stir them into active loyalty having failed, the Caliph resolved himself to head a force for Mesopotamia and Al-'Irak. The Greeks, taking

Caliph's campaign against Muṣ'ab, 71-72 A.H. 691 A.D.

[1] For example, it alarmed Ibn al-Ḥanefīya, and prevented his coming in for a time. The Caliph is represented as rather boasting of it at Al-Kūfa: "Beware," he said, "for I have the bonds by me which I cast around the neck of 'Amr ibn Sa'īd." According to some accounts 'Amr's rebellion took place somewhat later, on the occasion of the Caliph's setting out for Al-'Irak against Muṣ'ab; but the main outlines otherwise are the same; 'Amr persisting in his claim, the Caliph felt that his life was not safe, and that either he or 'Amr must die.

A.H. 64-73.

War against Muṣ'ab,

advantage of the divisions in the Muslim Empire, pressed heavily at this time on the Syrian frontier; and 'Abd al-Melik, to be free for his enterprise, had to make a truce with them at the weekly tribute of 1000 golden pieces. It was the year 71 A.H. before 'Abd al-Melik again broke ground. Having sown disaffection widely in Al-Kufa and Al-Basra by missives promising pardon and rewards, he laid siege to Kirkisiya, where Ibn az-Zubeir's governor ere long accepted the offer of amnesty, and with the Kei- tribes joined the Caliph's army. Muṣ'ab, now thoroughly alarmed, sought the help of Al-Muhallab, but that general was at the moment hotly engaged with the Khawarij, who were close upon the walls of Al-Basra. So he had to meet the Caliph on the Syrian frontier with only Ibn al-Ashtar, who, though tempted with the promise of Al-'Irak, stood fast by Muṣ'ab. When the two armies met, it was soon seen that the Caliph's missives had taken effect, and that treachery was rife in Muṣ'ab's camp. Ibn al-Ashtar, the only loyal friend he had, was one of the first to fall; and Muṣ'ab, deserted by his troops, and having seen his son slain before his eyes, refusing quarter, was slain by one of his own Kufaites, a hero to the last. His head, with the nose cut off, was sent round by 'Abd al-Melik to Egypt and Damascus. It was then to have been shown over the cities of Syria, when the Caliph's wife, with better feeling, had it washed and buried. Muṣ'ab died aged thirty-six. He was handsome and brave; but his memory is stained by the butchery perpetrated by his command at the death of Al-Mukhtār.

who is slain in battle, iv. or v. 72 A.H. Sept. or Oct., 691 A.D.

Caliph regains Kūfa and 'Irāḳ.

On Muṣ'ab's death, the Kufan army swore allegiance to 'Abd al-Melik, as did also the Arab tribes of the Syrian desert. Advancing on Al-Kufa, he encamped by the city forty days. There, one of the citizens made him a great feast at the ancient palace of the Khawarnak,[1] open to all. 'Abd al-Melik was delighted:—"If it would only last!" he said, "but as the poet sang" (and he quoted some verses), "*all is transitory here.*" Then he was taken over the palace, and being told of the ancient princes of Al-Hira who lived there, extemporised a couplet (for he was himself a poet),

[1] For the Palace of the Khawarnaḳ, see *Life of Mahomet*, 1st edition, vol. i. p. clxxi.

signifying that the world passes away, and but repeats itself.[1] The Caliph was fortunate now in obtaining the adhesion of Al-Muhallab, whom he confirmed in his commission against the Khawarij; and having arranged for the administration of Al-Kūfa, Al-Baṣra, and the various Eastern posts, returned to Damascus. A.H. 64-73. Khawarnak Palace.

Ibn az-Zubeir in retirement still held to his claim to the Caliphate. Virtual ruler for several years of the greater part of the Empire, he had remained singularly inactive at Mecca. His chief domestic work had been the restoration of the Holy House, destroyed 64 A.H. Having removed the débris, he came upon remains of the ancient limits of the Ishmaelite structure, and enlarged the walls accordingly.[2] Fire, we are told, flashed from the sacred rock when Ibn az-Zubeir had the temerity to strike the foundation with his pickaxe, as the same terror had overawed the people sixty years before when, in the youth of the Prophet, the Ka'ba was dismantled and rebuilt.[3] If instead of remaining inactive at home, and contenting himself with the issue of orders from the Holy City, he had gone forth to head his armies, the Caliphate might have been established in his line. But the defeat of his brother Muṣ'ab came upon him as an unlooked-for and fatal blow. He mounted the pulpit when hearing of it, and harangued the people on the treachery of the men of Al-'Iraḳ, and his readiness to die in defence of the Ka'ba. But trusting perhaps to the immunity of the Sanctuary, he took no further steps. Ibn Zubeir at Mecca.

If such were his thoughts, they were in vain; for before leaving Al-Kufa, 'Abd al-Melik resolved on putting an end to the pretensions of his rival. He therefore sent a column of horse and foot under Al-Ḥajjaj, an able officer now

[1] "Be not vexed with care, for thou too shalt pass away:
Therefore enjoy thyself, O man! whilst thou canst;
For that which was, shall not be again when it hath passed;
And that which shall be, only as what hath already been."

[2] A tradition is quoted from 'Āisha of Moḥammad having told her that he would himself have restored the Ka'ba to its ancient wider dimensions, but that the people having been so recently reclaimed from idolatry, he feared the effect upon them of appearing to tamper with the sacred edifice. Al-Ḥajjaj subsequently took the temple down and rebuilt it on its former lines.

[3] *Life of Moḥammad*, p. 27 *et seq.*

A.H. 64-73.

coming to the front. Marching from Al-Kufa Al-Hajjaj reached At-Ta'if, four days east of Mecca, in the month of Sha'ban (Jan. 692 A.D.), without opposition and forwarded letters of pardon to Ibn az-Zubeir if only he would submit. But Ibn az-Zubeir declined the offer. Frequent skirmishes took place on the plain of 'Arafat, in which Al-Hajjaj got the advantage. Al-Hajjaj then sought from the Caliph leave to besiege Mecca, and also reinforcements. He obtained both. Men remembered how shocked the same 'Abd al-Melik had been when, eight years before, Mecca was stormed by order of Yezid, and so they said the Caliph had gone back in his religion. But this was hardly fair to him; for so long as Ibn az-Zubeir remained rival Caliph in that otherwise secure sanctuary, the Empire could not be free from the danger of revolt. It was close upon the month of Pilgrimage when Al-Hajjaj, strengthened by reinforcements from Medina, from which Ibn az-Zubeir's governor had just been expelled, invested the city and mounted catapults on the surrounding heights. As the engines opened with their shot, the heavens thundered (so tradition goes) and twelve of the Syrian army were struck by lightning; but next day when the storm returned, the impartial thunderbolts fell upon the men of Mecca, an incident from which Al-Hajjaj drew happy augury. During the days of Pilgrimage, the bombardment was at the intercession of 'Omar's son 'Abdallah held over, and the solemnities proper to the season partially performed. The siege was shortly turned into a strict blockade, and in a few months the inhabitants, suffering the extremities of want, began to desert in great numbers to the enemy. Even two of his own sons did so, on Ibn az-Zubeir's advice; but a third preferred to stay and share his father's fate. The siege had now lasted seven months, when Ibn az-Zubeir lost heart. He was tempted to give in; but he would first consult his mother Asma, daughter of Abu Bekr, now a hundred years of age. The scene is touching. With the ancient spirit of the Arab matron, she exhorted her son, if still conscious of the right, to die as a hero should. "That," said he, as he stooped to kiss her forehead, "is what I thought myself; but I wished to strengthen my thought by thine." And so, putting on his armour, he rushed into the thickest, and fell in the

Hajjaj attacks Mecca.

Besieges the city, xi. 72 A.H. April, 692 A.D.

unequal fight. The heads of Ibn az-Zubeir and two of his leaders were exhibited at Medīna, and thence sent on to Damascus. Al-Ḥajjāj, giving thus early proof of his hard and cruel nature, had the pretender's body impaled on the outskirts of the Holy City. 'Abd al-Melik blamed him for his inhumanity, and bade him give the body up to Asmā, by whose loving hands it was washed and committed to the grave.

A.H. 64-73.

Ibn Zubeir dies fighting, vi. 73 A.H. Oct., 692 A.D.

Thus ended the rule of Ibn az-Zubeir, a man of noble but inactive spirit, who for nine years held the title, and much also of the real power, of Caliph. He died aged seventy-two.

Ibn Zubeir and his mother Asmā.

His mother, Asmā, is the same who, at the Hijra, seventy-three years before, tore off her girdle to bind with it the Prophet's wallet to his camel as he took his flight from the cave of Mount Thaur, and thus earned the historic name of "She of the shreds."[1] It is one of the last links that connect the Prophet with the chequered days on which we have now entered. What a world of events had transpired within the lifetime of this lady!

Ibn Khāzim faithful to Ibn Zubeir.

The only one of Ibn az-Zubeir's governors who remained faithful to his memory was Ibn Khāzim, now fighting with the rival clans of Khorasan. 'Abd al-Melik offered, if he swore allegiance, to confirm him in Khorāsān; but he indignantly rejected the offer. "I would have slain the envoy," he said, "had he not been of my own Ḳeis blood." But he made him swallow the Caliph's letter. Thereupon 'Abd al-Melik sent him the head of Ibn az-Zubeir, in order to assure him of his end. Ibn Khazim embalmed the relic, and forwarded it to the family of the deceased. He was shortly after slain in battle by one whose brother he had put to death in the intertribal warfare.

[1] *Life of Moḥammad*, p. 140 f.

CHAPTER L

REMAINDER OF 'ABD AL-MELIK'S REIGN. AL-HAJJĀJ; AL-MUHALLAB; REVOLT OF 'ABD AR-RAHMAN

73-86 A.H. 692-705 A.D.

'Abd al-Melik universally recognised, 73 A.H. 692 A.D.

ON the death of Ibn az-Zubeir, who for thirteen years had held his ground as rival of successive Caliphs, the Umeiyad rule was anew recognised, without dispute, over the whole Muslim realm, and 'Abd al-Melik named as Caliph in the prayers of every Mosque from east to farthest west. In his reign the Arab dominion reached its high water mark. They were the ruling race whose sway Muslims of all other races were obliged to acknowledge. He was able at last to turn his arms again towards the north, where the Muslims now obtained material victories over the Greek forces in Asia Minor and also in Armenia; so that apprehension in that direction was for the present at an end. But the feud between Keis and Kelb did not cease. Out of it sprang another between the Christian tribe of Taghlib and Suleim, and the tribe of Fezara was also brought in. The scene of the endless series of acts of vengeance was Mesopotamia, and the feud was carried on with the utmost cruelty. In Al-Basra the feud between Rabi'a and the Azd on one side and Temim and Keis on the other spread to Khorāsān, a Basrite colony. But it was as yet a far cry to Khorāsān, and it says much for 'Abd al Melik that he held together both Keis and Kelb in Syria, for when revenge was afoot, all political and religious bonds were thrown to the winds.

Hajjāj governor in Arabia.

But throughout the remainder of this reign the leading figure was unquestionably Al-Hajjaj, whose cruelties have stamped him as the worst tyrant of the age. For some time after the sack of Mecca he remained governor of Arabia. Having removed the unhallowed vestiges of the sacrilegious

siege from the precincts of the Ka'ba, which was by him restored to its previous dimensions, he visited Medīna. There he denounced in no measured terms the city in which 'Othmān had been murdered, and even branded certain of the citizens, known as hostile to the Umeiyad line, with the mark used for a subject race. A.H. 73-86.

In the following year a branch of the Khawārij, called the Azāriḳa,[1] assumed a threatening attitude on the Persian frontier, and Al-Muhallab was deputed from Khorasān, with heavy contingents from Al-Baṣra and Al-Kufa, again to fight against them. But on the governor of Al-'Irāḳ, Bishr, the youthful brother of the Caliph, dying shortly after, the troops from both cities began to desert Al-Muhallab and, despite remonstrance, return to their homes. The Caliph now saw that none but a strong hand could curb the license of the men of Al-'Irak, and so, to the joy of Al-Muhallab, Al-Ḥajjāj was appointed governor. He forthwith set out from Medīna with a small mounted escort, and crossing the desert by forced marches arrived in the early dawn unknown at Al-Kufa. He entered the Mosque as men were assembling for early prayer, and mounting the pulpit sat down, with face concealed behind the folds of his red turban. "To prayers! to prayers!" he cried aloud, and still sat muffled. Some thinking him a Khāriji adventurer, took up stones to cast at him. But they dropped them in terror as, uncovering his stern features, they recognised that it was Al-Ḥajjāj. In verses full of threat and fury, he upbraided the city for its treachery; "Beware," he said, "for verily it is as if I saw many a head before me all gory in its blood!" Then he commanded the Caliph's rescript to be read aloud. It opened with the greeting of *Peace;* but there was no response. "Stop!" said Al-Ḥajjāj in anger, to the reader; "is it come to this, that ye respond not to the greeting of the Caliph? I will teach you soon to mend your ways." The affrighted company at once joined in the loyal response, "Peace and blessing on the Caliph!" The letter read, Al-Ḥajjāj resumed his threatening tone;—"If ye reform not forthwith," he said, "there will soon be widows and orphans enough amongst you. Unless ye depart within three

Azāriḳa rebels in 'Irāḳ, 74 A.H. 693 A.D.

Ḥajjāj appointed to 'Irāḳ, 75 A.H. 695 A.D.

[1] So called from a leader of the name of Al-Azraḳ, who flourished some fifteen or twenty years before.

A.H. 73-86.

His severe administration.

days for Al-Muhallab's army. I swear that I will slay every man of you I find behind." And he was as great as his word. The citizens streamed day and night across the bridge; but some who failed to hasten their departure, an aged man amongst them,[1] were barbarously put to death. At Al-Basra, the same scene, with even increased severity, was enacted. It was emphatically now the reign of terror.[2]

Hajjaj in jeopardy.

With the view of encouraging Al-Muhallab in his harassing campaign, Al-Hajjaj with a column from Al-Basra encamped in his vicinity. There his troops mutinied for an increase of pay, such as had been given them by Mus'ab; and at one time Al-Hajjaj, refusing it and left almost alone, was in peril of his life. In the end, order was restored, and an amnesty proclaimed. Not many were put to death, but amongst them was the son of Anas, once body-servant of the Prophet, and now an aged citizen of Al-Basra. Not content with executing his son, Al-Hajjaj confiscated the possessions of the father also, and, on his expostulating, covered him with invective. Stung by his reproaches, Anas appealed to the Caliph, who upbraided his lieutenant in terms of such gross indecency as few but Arabs know how to give, and ordered him on pain of personal chastisement to withdraw his words, and treat Anas with the honour due to one who had in person served the Prophet. Al-Hajjaj, much disconcerted, made the best amend he could. Anas accepted the apology, but added what should have touched the despot more even than the Caliph's reprimand:—"Had a Nazarene, with all his infidelity, seen one who had served the Son of Mary but for a single day, truly he had done him honour, as thou hast not done to me, who served the Prophet of the Lord for full ten years." It is the last link that connects the pages of tradition with the person of the Prophet.[3]

Harsh treatment of Anas the Prophet's servant.

[1] 'Omeir ibn Ḍābi', partly on account of the part his father had played in the assassination of 'Othmān.

[2] Ibn al-Athir notices the growing barbarity of public executions. With the early Caliphs, the culprit's turban was simply removed and the head bared just as the falchion was about to strike it off. Mus'ab had the hair and beard shaved off; and the victim exposed thus to public derision, was decapitated. Now he was pinioned and often suspended by wedges to the wall, and so struggling, with his hands torn by the nails or hooks, his head was struck off.

[3] *Life of Mohammad*, pp. 202, 526.

A.H. 73-86.

Khārīji insurrection. Shebīb. 76-77 A.H. 695-697 A.D.

Though Al-Ḥajjāj escaped these recent dangers, his viceroyalty was during the next two or three years seriously disturbed by Khawārij of various shades. Some were dissatisfied with a government that seemed to trample on the sanctions of Islām, and preferred return to the days of 'Omar, under a Caliph to be chosen (some still holding to Ḳoreish, and others not) by the voice of the people at large. The Theocrats, on the other hand, would none of any Caliph —their cry, as of old, was *No Rule but the Lord's alone*. But all were nerved to action by the tyranny of Al-Ḥajjāj, and by the countenance accorded him by the Caliph. The most dangerous was the latter class. These had no worldly views. As a matter of conscience, they fought with equal bravery whatever the chances of success, goaded by a wild fanaticism. They belonged for the most part to one tribe, the proud Beni Sheiban of Bekr, who had migrated from their settlements on the right bank of the Euphrates to new pasture grounds in northern Mesopotamia. Their leader Shebīb ibn Yezīd, with his few hundreds, put to flight the thousands of Al-Ḥajjāj. By rapid counter-marches, he outmanœuvred his enemy, and with desperate bravery over and again discomfited the columns which, for two years, were continually sent against him. He repeatedly stormed the walls of Al-Kūfa, and on one occasion effecting an entrance, made havoc in the city, and slew many of the worshippers assembled in the Mosque. Abusing the Kūfans in his despatches to the Caliph, for their cowardice, Al-Ḥajjāj was reinforced by a contingent of Syrian troops. With their aid he succeeded at last in dispersing the followers of Shebīb, who was drowned, at the end of the year 77 A.H. (Spring, 697 A.D.), by his horse stumbling on a bridge of boats over the river at Al-Ahwāz.[1]

Khawārij dispersed.

The land-tax.

Under Al-Ḥajjāj the revenues from the kharāj or land-tax began to fall off owing to the peasantry flocking into the towns; and he adopted the drastic remedy of forbidding them to migrate and of compelling those who had done so

[1] There is a story that his body was sent to Al-Ḥajjāj, who had his heart taken out. It was hard as a stone, rebounding when cast on the floor; and within was found a drop of coagulated blood, such as that from which the Ḳor'ān tells us man was evolved. Sūra xxii. 5; xcvi. 2; Ibn Khallikān i. 617. His mother was a Greek captive girl.

A.H. 73-86. to return. The names of their lands were even branded upon their hands. Such measures aroused resentment, and so contributed to swell the ranks of the disaffected under Ibn al Ash'ath. Under 'Omar II. another plan had to be tried.

Muhallab's campaign against Azāriḳa, 76-78 A.H. 695-697 A.D.

Al-Muhallab was still engaged in Persia with Khawārij of the Azraki sect. Driven out of Fārs, they fell back on Kirmān, and for a year and a half eluded or defied the Caliph's forces. Their chronic rebellion might have lasted longer, had they not fallen out among themselves, and broken up into parties that were soon effectively dispersed. Thus the Azarika, having kept Al-'Irāḳ and Persia more or less in turmoil for a period of twenty years, were at last put an end to. In recognition of his success, Al-Ḥajjāj received Al-Muhallab with great honour at Al-Baṣra, and invested him with the governments of Khorāsān and Sijistān, which had lately (78 A.H.) come under his jurisdiction. From Merv, Al-Muhallab crossed the Oxus, and with his sons warred for two years against the Turkomans in that direction, who, notwithstanding previous campaigns waged with various success, were yet but partially brought under Muslim influence. He died 82 A.H., and was succeeded by his sons. His services to Islām in the long and obstinate struggle with the Khawārij were great; and the name he left behind was singularly fair and unsullied.

His death, 82 A.H. 701-702 A.D.

Ibn al-Ash'ath rebels against Ḥajjāj, 80 A.H. 699 A.D.

Al-Ḥajjāj was yet to be exposed to another danger: the great King beyond Sijistān, named Zunbil, when attacked drew the Muslim forces into difficult passes of Afghanistan, from which they were allowed to retire only on the payment of a humiliating ransom. To avenge the affront, an army was raised, named "the peacock army," so splendidly was it equipped at the cost of a heavy war cess on Al-Baṣra and Al-Kūfa. The command was unwisely placed in the hands of the ambitious grandson of Al-Ash'ath, who marched against Zunbil, 80 A.H., put him to flight, and ravaged his land. Mindful, however, of the recent misfortune, Ibn al Ash'ath (for so he is commonly called) would have held his hand for a time till the country settled down; but Al-Ḥajjāj, upbraiding him with faint-heartedness, peremptorily bade him to war on; and when expostulated with, threatened supersession. The army,

equally with their Commander, resented the action of the "Enemy" (as they called him) "of God and man"; and, declaring war against both him and his Master, swore allegiance to Ibn al-Ash'ath, who, making favourable terms with Zunbīl, forthwith marched on Al-'Irāḳ. The Caliph, in alarm, sent reinforcements, which Al-Ḥajjāj pushed on to the frontier. But Ibn al-Ash'ath beat them back at Tostar, and crossing the Tigris, advanced on Al-Baṣra. The rebel, entering the city, was received with open arms.[1] Al-Ḥajjāj, determined not to be beaten, retired with a few people of Thakīf and Ḳoreish, until reinforcements of his Syrians under their Kelbite leader defeated their assailants, who thereupon fell back on Al-Kufa, which had already thrown off its allegiance under a Temīmite captain. Al-Baṣra being now at his mercy, Al-Ḥajjāj took a signal revenge by treacherously slaying (so we are told) 11,000 of the inhabitants after promising them quarter. Meanwhile crowds of the discontented citizens streamed forth to Ibn al-Ash'ath, who was able once more to meet Al-Ḥajjāj, half-way between the two cities, with 100,000 men. The Caliph was now so alarmed that he offered terms to the rebels by the hand of his son and brother. Al-Ḥajjāj was to be superseded, the pensions of the 'Irāḳites were to be made equal to those of the Syrians, and suitable provision made for Ibn al-Ash'ath. Al-Ḥajjāj remonstrated with the Caliph, reminding him of 'Othman's fate, but he was firm. Ibn al-Ash'ath was inclined to accept the offer; but his army rejected it with scorn, and prepared for battle. Several months were spent in skirmishing and single combats; and it was not till the middle of 82 A.H. that a

A.H. 73-86.

Takes Baṣra 81 A.H. Jan., 701 A.D.

Defeat of Ibn al-Ash'ath, 82 A.H. March, 701 A.D.,

who is beaten, vi. 82 A.H.

[1] The reason assigned for this sudden acceptance of the pretender is singular, and is illustrative of the progress of Islām in Al-'Irāḳ. Al-Ḥajjāj, finding that the Jewish and Christian cultivators, to escape the *Jizya* or capitation-tax, embraced Islām and flocked in crowds to the cities, so that the revenues were from this cause seriously depressed, ordered his governors to send all such back to their villages and farms, and to take the tax from them as before. There was, in consequence, great lamentation among these village refugees, who went about crying, *O Moḥammad! O Moḥammad!* and knew not whither to go. The population were deeply touched at their lamentations, especially the "Ḳor'ān-Readers"; and this was one of the reasons, we are told, which led to the sudden acquiescence of Al-Baṣra in the revolt against Al-Ḥajjāj and the Caliph.

A.H. 73-86. great battle was fought. The leader of the *Kor'an-Readers* of the day, and mainstay of the rebels falling early in the fight, his followers fled in dismay, and the army, thus disheartened, was totally discomfited. Ibn al-Ash'ath retired hastily to Al-Basra, and was there joined by many followers, who, though an amnesty was proclaimed, covenanted to fight under him to the death. Pursued by Al-Hajjaj, he was again beaten in a heavy engagement on the Persian border, and thence effected his escape to Kirman. Eventually he took refuge with Zunbil, who a year or two afterwards sent his head to Al-Hajjaj. He is said to have died or committed suicide.

His death, 85 A.H.

Yezid, son of Muhallab, 83 A.H.

In his flight Ibn al-Ash'ath had been followed to the East by some 60,000 of his defeated troops, who, either hating Al-Ḥajjaj, or too deeply compromised in rebellion, refused the amnesty. These, failing to induce Ibn al-Ash'ath to leave his protector and again try the fortune of war, set out on their own behalf, and, under 'Abd ar-Raḥman ibn al-'Abbas al-Hashimi, took possession of Herat. Yezid, son of Al-Muhallab, governor at Merv, ordered them to evacuate the place and move elsewhere; but, choosing rather to fight, they were by him defeated and dispersed. Many were taken prisoners, and those of note sent to Al-Ḥajjaj at Wasit, which was then a-building; and he, both now and after the recent engagements in Al-'Irak, shed the blood of his captives with unsparing hand and heartless cruelty. He was on this occasion vexed with Yezid for having pardoned some leading men, because, as he suspected, they were of his own Yemeni blood, while Al-Ḥajjaj himself was of Ḳeis; and this is assigned as the reason for his shortly after superseding Yezid and his brothers by the famous Ḳoteiba.

Superseded by Ḳoteiba.

The rebellion of Ibn al-Ash'ath was a revolt of the Arabs of Al-'Irak against their Syrian masters, an aftermath of the old enmity between the kings of Ghassan and those of Al-Ḥira. Ibn al-Ash'ath himself was of Kinda, a descendant of a race of kings, and he looked upon Al-Ḥajjaj as a plebeian; but the tribes of Hamdan, Temim, Bekr, and others were on his side. The question of pensions also came in, the 'Iraḳites demanding equality with the Syrians in that respect.

In this year the military station of Wāsiṭ was founded, so called, as midway (*wāsiṭ*) between Al-Kūfa and Al-Baṣra, Al-Medain and Al-Ahwāz. The main object was, no doubt, to have an independent cantonment holding in check the restless cities. The pretext, however, assigned by Al-Ḥajjāj was the desire to check the license of the Syrian soldiers quartered in the country. Conveniently situated in the well-watered plain betwixt the Tigris and Euphrates, Wasiṭ became the chief military centre of the Empire, and so continued as long as the Caliphate itself; but it was a confession that the Syrians felt that they were occupying a hostile country, and so widened the breach between the two.

A.H. 73-86.
Wāsiṭ founded, 83 A.H. 702 A.D.

While these events were passing in the east, 'Abd al-Melik was able after the fall of Ibn az-Zubeir, to throw aside the humiliating treaty concluded with the Emperor; and, from the year 73 A.H., his generals, some of them his own sons, prosecuted with vigour, but not always with success, yearly campaigns in Asia Minor, Armenia, and the coast of Africa. Up to 76 A.H., the relations between the two Courts were friendly; but then, after an interval of fifteen years, a singular incident broke the peace. The Greeks imported their papyrus from Egypt and exported dinars to the Arabs. Before 'Abd al-Melik the papyrus was stamped with a cross and Christian sentences, but now the words of the Ḳor'ān "Say, He alone is God" were used for a water-mark. The Emperor threatened that if such affront were repeated, he would strike coins with words respecting Moḥammad grievous to his followers. Heretofore the Arabs had used gold and copper Byzantine coins and silver coins copied from the Sasanian, with the addition of the three letters *b s m* (In the name of [God]) on the margin. Mu'awiya had indeed instituted an independent coinage, but the coins were rejected, having no cross, and so withdrawn. Now 'Abd al-Melik issued a purely Muslim coinage, gold, silver, and copper, called by the Byzantine names dinar (denarius aureus), dirhem (drachma), and fals (follis). The dinar was about the size of a half-sovereign, the dirhem rather less than a sixpence; but the words came to mean gold and silver coins of whatever weight. They bore, besides the mint and date, sentences from the Ḳor'ān, generally, "There is no god but God; He has no

Hostilities with Greece, 73-84 A.H. 692-703 A.D.

Mint of Damascus.

A.H. 73-80. partner." "God is the One, and the Eternal God: He did not beget, nor was He begotten." "Muḥammad is the Apostle of God, sent with guidance and the religion of truth, to make it prevail over all other religions."[1] The amity of the two Courts thus rudely broken, war was prosecuted vigorously. Its fortune varied. In 79 A.H., Antioch was seized by the Greeks for a time; and under Justinian severe reverses were inflicted on the Muslims. On the other hand, the latter took many strongholds in Asia Minor, and penetrated as far as Erzerum. The people on the borderlands of Syria and Armenia suffered greatly in this chronic warfare; and in 84 A.H. so many churches were set on fire that the year was called "The Year of Burning."

Official language Arabic.

A second important innovation was that the Government business and accounts were carried on in Arabic instead of in Greek, as they had been in Syria, or in Persian, as they had been in Al-'Irak. The change was made at the suggestion of a Persian Maula of Sijistan, Ṣâliḥ ibn 'Abd ar-Raḥmân.

Reverses in Africa, 62-69 A.H. 681-688 A.D.

With even greater energy, but more chequered fortune, the Muslim forces were engaged in Africa. 'Oḳba pushed his armies from Kairawan to the verge of the Atlantic.[2] At Tangier he heard from Count Julian a tempting account of the prize that lay across the strait; but the attempt on the Spanish coast was not to be just yet. The Berbers were

[1] Weil, guided by discovery of Muslim coins prior to this reign, relates this incident somewhat differently from our Arab authorities. It is no doubt true that we find silver coins struck by 'Omar in the old Persian mints with short sentences as "Praise be to the Lord," etc.; and this went on, more or less, throughout the reign of Mu'âwiya, who struck golden coins with the design of a sword. It may be true, also, that local governors coined Muslim money before this reign. But notwithstanding, the Greek and old Persian currencies held their ground throughout the Empire until now. It was not till this reign, as we are distinctly told by Arabian writers, that the Muslim coinage became trustworthy either in weight or touch. The mintage of Al-Ḥajjâj was held the purest even by 'Abbâsid Caliphs; but the pietists objected to its use, because it had as its legend a verse of the Koran, which might fall into the hands of the unbelievers, or of Muslims ritually unclean. For the defect of a single grain, each of the 100 workmen now employed in the mint received 100 stripes; making thus, we are told, "10,000 stripes for a single grain." Ibn al-Athîr's chapter on this subject contains some curious details on the new coinage, vol. iv. p. 337.

[2] This expedition is probably an anticipation.

treated as an inferior race; and Kuseila, one of their chiefs who had embraced Islam, was embittered by being put to some menial office. Carrying his countrymen with him, and joining the Greeks, this rebel advanced with an overwhelming force against 'Oḳba, who was slain, and his whole army destroyed at a place called Tahūdha, south-east of Biskra in Algeria, where the mosque containing his tomb may still be seen. Kuseila thereupon occupied Ḳairawān, but entered into an agreement to respect the Muslim families (now his co-religionists) settled there. Most of the Arabs then retired to Egypt, and it was not till 69 A.H. that anything further was attempted. In that year, 'Abd al-Melik sent an army under Zuheir, one of 'Oḳba's old commanders, who, in a great battle, having slain Kuseila, beat both the Greeks and Berbers. But these, reinforced by sea from Sicily, again advancing, took Zuheir unawares, and cut his entire force to pieces.

A.H. 73-86.

Reverses in Africa.

Such repeated calamities were sorely felt at Damascus; but some years elapsed before steps could be taken to restore the prestige of the Muslim arms. At last in 74 A.H. an army, "greater than ever before had entered the land of Africa," was despatched under command of Ḥassān ibn an-No'man al-Ghassani. From Ḳairawān they marched to Carthage, and put to flight the Greeks and Berbers massed in great numbers for its defence. Then they stormed the city,—the inhabitants escaping as best they could by sea to Sicily and Spain,—took much booty, and prisoners without number; and having destroyed many of the Roman buildings, and ravaged the country far and near, returned to Ḳairawān. But good fortune had not yet dawned on African adventure. A "priestess" (Kahina) wielding a mysterious influence had succeeded Kuseila: and she, inspiring the Berbers with new courage, inflicted signal defeat on Ḥassan, who was driven back on Barḳa, and there for five years forced to remain inactive.[1] Then, reinforced by the Caliph, he overthrew the priestess, who was slain in the fight. Thereupon, her sons, with 12,000 of their army, joined the Muslim force, which then reoccupied Ḳairawan. Islam now spread rapidly amongst the natives. Ḥassan remained in command till

Conquests in West Africa, 74 A.H. 693 A.D.

[1] He fortified the place, and "The Castles of Ḥassān," says Ibn al-Athīr, "are known by his name to the present day."

A.H. 73-86. 80 A.H., when he was superseded by Musa, of whom we shall hear more anon.

Mūsa ibn Khazim's career in Khorasān.

The progress of the Muslim power during this Caliphate in the far East and beyond the Oxus, was paralysed for a time by the continued jealousies and discord of the Arab tribes that formed its garrison. The story of Musa, son of Ibn Khazim, illustrates both this feeling and the relation in which the independent or protected States beyond the frontier stood towards the Muslim Court. Ibn Khāzim, it will be remembered, having put many of the Beni Temim to death, was deserted by his followers, and returning to Nīsābūr, sent Musa to save his property at Merv, and place it in some stronghold across the Oxus. This he did with a following of one or two hundred mounted men. The Prince of Bokhara, and other chiefs whom he approached, refused to meet him; but Tarkhun, king of Samarkand, received him into friendship. One of his followers, however, having killed a Turkoman, he was obliged to fly to Tirmidh, where, treated kindly by the Chief, he took advantage of a feast to seize his fortress. Established there, the Keisites who had served under his father flocked to him, and refugees also from the army of Ibn al-Ash'ath, to the number of some 8000. With their aid, Musa beat back not only the Turkomans, but the Muslim columns sent from Merv to dislodge him. Thus prospering, his followers pressed him to recross the river and take possession of Khorasān. But he was content with the country beyond the Oxus, and with expelling the provincial residents sent from Merv. Al-Muhallab, and after him his sons, thought best to leave him alone; and so for fifteen years Musa was undisputed ruler of this great tract. At last, one of Al-Muhallab's sons, thinking to please Al-Hajjāj, sent an army against him, which was joined by 15,000 of Tarkhun's Turks; and by these, after a long siege, Mūsa was defeated and slain, 85 A.H. But so inveterate were the tribal leanings of Al-Hajjaj—who, as we have lately seen, was vexed at Yezid having spared some of Ibn al-Ash'ath's followers because they were of Yemeni blood'—that he was little pleased with tidings of the death of Musa. "I bade Yezid," he said, "to slay the Yemeni, and he replied that he had given him quarter; and now his brother hastens to tell me of the death of this noble Keisite, Mūsa, son of Ibn Khāzim, as if, instead

Defeated and slain, 85 A.H. 704 A.D.

of grieving, that would rejoice my heart!" So strong was the clannish jealousy and party spirit of the Arab race. A.H. 73-86.

'Abd al-'Azīz, brother of the Caliph, who had long been Governor of Egypt, held the next title to the throne, having been nominated by his father Merwan. 'Abd al-Melik now sought to set his claim aside in favour of his own son Al-Welīd, and was supported in his desire by Al-Ḥajjāj. But 'Abd al-'Aziz would not surrender his right; nor would he agree to the nomination of Al-Welīd even as his own successor;—"For," said he, "do not I see in mine own son what thou seest in thine? Besides, we know not which of us may die the first; leave it therefore thus alone." The event anticipated did occur, for next year 'Abd al-'Aziz died; and Al-Welīd was then done homage to as next the throne, throughout the Empire. The only opposition was at Medīna, where a recusant, affirming the old doctrine of popular election, demurred even under threat of the sword, to the declaration of an Heir-apparent. The Caliph, however, contented himself with inflicting stripes upon the malcontent. Welīd proclaimed Heir-apparent, 85 A.H. 704 A.D.

Jerusalem is to Jews and Christians the holiest place on earth. It was only by an accident that it was not so to Muslims as well, and one constant aim of the earlier Umeiyads was to shift the religious centre of Islām from the Ḥijaz to Syria.[1] Mu'awiya had already attempted to remove Mohammad's pulpit to Damascus, and, when prevented, explained that he merely wished to see if it were worm-eaten. He was proclaimed Caliph at Jerusalem and on that occasion performed prayers at Golgotha, Gethsemane, and the grave of Mary. 'Abd al-Melik is said to have forbidden the pilgrimage to Mecca on the pretext of danger, and ordered that it should be to Jerusalem. In the year 72 A.H. (691-692 A.D.) he built the Dome of the Rock which still stands, round which runs the inscription, "This dome was built by the servant of God 'Abd[allah the Imam Al-Ma'mūn, Amir of the Faithful, in the year 72. May God be pleased with him." The letters in brackets are a later insertion crowded into a space too narrow for them. Originally there stood "al-Melik A" as the spacing and date show. Even Attempt to make Jerusalem the centre of Islām.

[1] De Goeje considers that this is impossible, but the weight of evidence seems to be for it.

A.H. 73-86.

after the Umeiyads had obtained undisputed sway. Al-Walid made efforts in the same direction, but in vain.

'Abd al-Melik dies, 14 ix. 86 A.H. Sept. 8, 705 A.D.

In the following year 'Abd al Melik died, sixty years of age, having reigned twenty-one years, during the first portion of which, however, his title was disputed by Ibn az-Zubeir. From his deathbed he enjoined on his sons mildness and concord, and bade them make much of Al-Hajjaj:—"For," said the dying Caliph, "it is he that hath made our name to be named in every pulpit throughout the Homelands of Islam, and subdued our enemies under us." He was buried at the Jābiya Gate of Damascus.

His character,

Of 'Abd al Melik the Arabian historian says—He was the first Caliph that resorted to treacherous execution, as in the case of 'Amr ibn Sa'id; the first to conduct the exchequer in Arabic instead of Persian; the first to prohibit men from talking in the Caliph's presence; the first to play the miser; the first to declare, as on the death of Ibn az-Zubeir, "Let no one enjoin equity and the fear of God upon me, or I will strike his head from off his shoulders." But if such things were really spoken of him, we must attribute it in great part to the prejudice of 'Abbasid writers, and to the odium naturally attaching to his siege of the Holy City, and the destruction of the Ka'ba. Apart from the case of 'Amr ibn Sa'id, we are told of nothing in his personal control inconsistent with a wise, mild, and just administration; although, by the support accorded to Al-Hajjaj, he must undoubtedly be held responsible, at second hand, for the cruelty and injustice of his lieutenant. The charge of penuriousness, too, appears equally unfounded; for at least in one respect he was lavish. Himself a composer of no mean merit, he encouraged poets by a princely liberality. Many stories are told of literary contests held before him by such bards as Jerir, Al-Farazdak, Kutheiyir 'Azza, and Al-Akhtal the Christian, and of the largesses conferred on such occasions. Of niggardliness in any branch of the administration, no instance has been given. His piety was a matter of policy.

and successful reign.

Upon the whole, the verdict on 'Abd al-Melik must be in his favour. His life was a stormy one. As a boy he witnessed the tumultuous scenes at Medina ending in the outrage on 'Othman's life,—scenes as we know from his addresses to the inhabitants of that City, which made a

lasting impression on him. He was early employed in the affairs of Mecca, and accompanied his father Merwan thither in the negotiations held with Ibn az-Zubeir. During the first half of his reign the throne was often in jeopardy, and a coalition of his adversaries would probably have overthrown it. Yet, with but one exception, we never hear of his being betrayed into acts of bitterness and retaliation: on the contrary, before resorting to extremities, he repeatedly made offers of pardon and reconciliation. Like 'Othman, most of his stadtholders were relatives of his own, but they were able men, and there was none left to oppose. He seemed to like to give iniquitous governors to Medina, like Hisham ibn Isma'il. In the end, having triumphed over all his enemies, he left to his sons a splendid inheritance, and with it the ample and ready means for extending the kingdom on every side.[1] A.H. 73-86.

[1] He had fifteen sons by eight wives, besides slave-girls. Four of his sons, as we shall see, succeeded to the throne.

CHAPTER LI

CALIPHATE OF AL-WELĪD. CONQUESTS IN CENTRAL ASIA, SIND, ASIA MINOR, AFRICA, SPAIN. DEATH OF AL-ḤAJJĀJ

86-96 A.H. 705-715 A.D.

Welid, 86 A.H. 705 A.D.

HAVING performed the funeral service over his father's grave, Al-Welid returned to the Great Mosque of Damascus, and ascending the pulpit, delivered an address lamenting the loss of his father and blessing his memory.

'Omar beautifies the Holy Cities.

Al-Welid, reposing the same trust as his father in Al-Ḥajjāj, maintained him in the Viceroyalty of the East. But Arabia he made over to his own cousin, the pious 'Omar, son of 'Abd al-'Aziz, under whom, for several years, Mecca and Medina enjoyed, in marked contrast to the rule of Hisham ibn Ismā'il, a mild and beneficent administration. Aided by a council of learned citizens, his government of Medina was also popular. He beautified and enlarged the Mosque by embracing within its court the apartments of the Prophet's wives, and others, originally built around it. Artificers were furnished by Syria; and the Emperor, informed of the pious undertaking, sent a gift of gold, forty camel-loads of mosaics, and 100 Byzantine masons.[1] Under Al-Welid's instructions, 'Omar also had the roads and passes on the Pilgrim routes made easy, wells dug about the desert

[1] The Emperor presented 100,000 mithḳāls of gold. It all reads somewhat oddly immediately after the following:—"In the same year, Maslama, the Caliph's brother, warred against the Greeks, took three fortresses, one being the *Fort of Constantine*, and slew of the mongrel Arabs 1000, carrying off at the same time heavy spoil." But we are also told that in the year 90 A.H. (708 A.D.) the Muslim admiral was taken prisoner, and as a matter of grace restored to the Caliph.

stations, and fountains to play at Mecca and Medīna.[1] It was all for 'Omar a labour of love; and so well did he carry out these useful and ornamental works, that the Caliph, some time after, when on pilgrimage to the Holy Cities, expressed his delight and thankfulness at all he saw. A.H. 86-96.

Severity of Ḥajjāj.

The attractions of 'Omar's beneficent rule drew away from the heavy hand of Al-Ḥajjāj great numbers of the men of Al-'Irāḳ who in Mecca and Medīna thus escaped his tyranny. This irritated Al-Ḥajjāj all the more, and 'Omar felt bound to inform the Caliph of his increasing severity. Al-Ḥajjāj, on the other hand, complained bitterly of the shelter given to his malcontent subjects in the Holy Cities; and Al-Welīd, yielding to Al-Ḥajjāj, recalled 'Omar. In his room, separate governors were appointed to Mecca and Medīna, who ruthlessly expelled the immigrants, and threatened with death any citizen who dared to give them shelter. One of such refugees, Ibn Jubeir, who had been paymaster of Ibn al-Ash'ath's army was, after an affecting interview with his family, executed with heartless cruelty by Al-Ḥajjāj. This was a couple of years before his own death, and remorse for it affected his mind. At night he would awake with the vision of his victim clutching the bed-clothes, and crying out, *O Enemy of the Lord, for what hast thou slain me?* whereupon the wretched man would keep calling aloud, *What have I to do with thee, thou son of Jubeir!*

Yezīd ibn Muhallab escapes from him to Suleimān, 90 A.H.

His treatment of Yezīd and his brothers, sons of Al-Muhallab, was equally cruel and vindictive. Against these, it will be remembered, Al-Ḥajjāj had a grudge on account of their Yemeni leanings. After the fall of Ibn al-Ash'ath they were the only stumbling-block in his path. They were now imprisoned on the convenient charge against retiring

[1] There was need of some such supply at Mecca, for the multitude of pilgrims was now so great that in a dry season the water fell altogether short. In fact, one year the want was so pressing that 'Omar bade the people join him in prayer; and shortly after rain fell in such torrents that the City was inundated. Such pious traits of 'Omar are a popular subject with the traditionists.

The governor succeeding 'Omar was profane enough to praise Al-Welīd at the expense of Abraham,—the former having brought sweet water into Mecca, whereas Abraham only gave them the brackish well of Zemzem.

A.H. 86-96.

governors, of embezzlement. Having to set out on a campaign against the Kurds, he took them with his camp, under a Syrian guard. Yezid was subjected to torture, which he bore with fortitude; but on one occasion the instrument of torture pierced his leg, and he cried aloud. His sister, one of Al-Hajjaj's wives, alarmed at the cry, screamed, whereupon the tyrant divorced her on the spot. The prisoners were fortunate enough to effect their escape; and Al-Hajjaj, thinking they had fled to Khorasan, warned Koteiba of the danger. But they had taken horse in the opposite direction, and fled to Ramleh in Palestine, where they took refuge with Suleimân, the Caliph's brother. Al-Hajjaj was instant with the Caliph that Yezid should be delivered up; whereupon Suleimân sent him, and his own son with him, to Damascus, both in chains, with a letter supplicating mercy. Al-Welîd, touched at the sight, let them depart in peace, and forbade Al-Hajjaj to interfere. Yezid continued to live with the heir-apparent as his intimate and, as we shall see hereafter, favourite courtier.[1] His tribe, the Azd, was also that of the mother of Suleimân.

Escape of Yezid.

Death of Hajjâj, 95 A.H. 714 A.D.

During the remainder of his life we do not hear much of Al-Hajjaj, and it was well for him that he died before Al-Welîd, for he had given mortal offence to Suleimân, whose right of succession Al-Welîd desired to set aside in favour of his son, and the design was encouraged by Al-Hajjaj. But the wrath of Suleimân, though escaped by the father, fell, as we shall see, with terrible severity on his family and adherents. Al-Hajjaj stands out in the annals of Islâm as the incarnation of cruelty. But the Caliphate owed much to him. For twenty years, the absolute ruler of the East in times of trouble and danger, with anarchy abroad, perversity and fickleness at home, rebellion and wild fanaticism at his doors, Al-Hajjaj, by his bravery and resolution, maintained the strength and restored the prosperity of the Empire in Al-'Irak, 'Arabia, and Khorâsân. Severity was no doubt often justified in quelling the turbulent elements around; but nothing can excuse the enormous bloodshed and inhumanity which have handed down his name as that of one of the

[1] Suleimân was so much attached to Yezid that whenever he received some special rarity, or beautiful slave-girl, he would send them to his friend.

cruellest tyrants the world has ever seen.[1] When, after twenty years of fighting he had pacified his provinces, he turned his attention to the arts of peace, developing the canal system, reclaiming land, and doing his best to prevent the peasantry from flocking from the country into the towns. He and Ziyad were the two great ministers of the Umeiyads, without whom the dynasty would not have survived. In one respect Ziyād was the greater of the two, since he did not use force in the shape of Syrian soldiers, but played off one faction against another, and so gained his end. A.H. 86-96.

Wars of Ḳoteiba in Khorāsān, 86-96 A.H. 705-715 A.D.

An indirect advantage has by some been attributed to the tyranny of Al-Ḥajjāj, in that his reign of terror drove many from their homes to swell the armies in the field, and so help forward the conquests for which the Caliphate of Al-Welīd is famous. A brief outline of these will now be given, beginning with the campaign of Ḳoteiba ibn Muslim in Central Asia. That great warrior, who was of Bāhila, a neutral tribe, advanced every summer into the provinces beyond the Oxus, retiring, as autumn advanced, to winter in Merv. Up to this time the Muslim campaigns appear to have been of the nature of *ghazawāt*, or raids, bringing the subdued lands into the category of allied, protected, or tributary, rather than of conquered and subject, states. The proceedings were now of a more permanent nature. Ḳoteiba's first advance was against Balkh, Tukhāristan, and Ferghāna. At Balkh, among the captives, was the wife of Barmek a physician, who was taken as a slave-girl into the *ḥarīm* of 'Abdallah, Ḳoteiba's brother. Soon after, peace being made, the lady, as a matter of grace, was restored to her husband; but the result of the short union with 'Abdallah was a son, acknowledged by him, and known in after-days as Khalid the

[1] Tradition puts the number of lives sacrificed by Al-Ḥajjāj (apart from carnage on the field of battle) at 120,000,—mere guess work of course. He was fond of making copies of the Ḳor'ān with his own hand, and as a work of merit making distribution of them; but he was bitterly opposed to Ibn Mas'ūd's text, declaring that he would behead anyone who followed it. Many savage sayings are attributed to him. The odium attaching to his name has no doubt magnified his demerits, which, however, with every allowance for exaggeration, were pre-eminently bad.

A.H. 86-96. Barmeki.[1] The next campaign was against Peikund, a
87 A.H. trading emporium of Bokhara beyond the Oxus. The Turkomans of Soghd and other hordes swarmed in such multitudes around Koteiba for the defence of this rich city, as to cut off his communications. For two months Al-Hajjáj received no tidings, and had prayers offered up for him in
Bokhara taken, 88 A.H. the mosques throughout the East. At last the city fell. The fighting men were put to the sword, their families taken captive, and vast stores of arms and "spoil such as never before seen in Khorásán." In 88 A.H. another advance was made on Bokhara, and many places of note were taken. A heavy battle was fought with a vast host from Soghd and the surrounding districts, commanded by "a nephew of the Emperor of China," who after a determined resistance was
89 A.H. put to flight. Next year, Koteiba again advanced through Soghd and Kish, against Werdán, king of Bokhara, who after two days' fighting took to flight: but the city, resisting every attempt, was left unstormed. Al-Hajjáj upbraided Koteiba with the failure, and bade him renew the attack on a plan furnished to him of the defences. This he did
90 A.H. with a strong force, which mainly through the bravery of the Beni Temim (for the Azd at first gave way before the fierce onset of the Turks),[2] routed the enemy. Bokhara thus taken, the surrounding province was completely subdued.

Rising in Tukharistán, 91 A.H. On the approach of winter, the Muslim troops being withdrawn for the season, Nizak, minister of the Prince of Tukharistan, formed a conspiracy with the surrounding powers to cast off the foreign yoke too evidently now settling down heavily upon them. To prevent his Sovereign, who opposed the design, from interfering, and

[1] Weil thinks the story was invented to give the Barmekide family a status they would not otherwise have had as mere natives of Balkh. There is, however, nothing unlikely in the incident. It was altogether in accord with law and habit, only in this case the lady was given back,—an act which, even with the dishonour, must be regarded as merciful in a Muslim conqueror.

[2] The Muslim women from the camp rushed out screaming at the retreating column, and, beating their horses on their heads, forced them back upon the enemy. So even in these advanced and exposed campaigns we see that the Muslims carried their women and families with them.

yet give an appearance of respect, he placed links of gold upon him. He then expelled the resident, and proceeded to enlist against Islam the potentates all around, from the Murghāb to the Oxus.[1] Beyond posting a column under his brother, to guard the frontier, Ḳoteiba could do nothing to oppose this combination till the following year, when, largely reinforced from Persia, he again broke ground. Carrying all before him, he found Nizak strongly posted in Khulm, at the entrance of a pass guarded by a fort. Bribing a deserter, he was shown a route to turn the pass, and so fell upon the rear of the enemy, who effected escape across the valley of Ferghāna. Here Nīzak was again taken in a defile guarded on one hand by Ḳoteiba and on the other by his brother. Thus hemmed in for months, he suffered the extremity of want. But the season again forcing a return to winter quarters, Ḳoteiba, unwilling to leave Nizak still abroad, beguiled him into his camp with promise of safe-conduct. Reporting the capture to Al-Ḥajjāj, he asked for leave to put him to death. After a long delay permission came; and so, with 700 of his followers,[2] Nizak was slain and his head sent to Al-Ḥajjāj. The Prince of Tukhāristān was with his retinue sent to Damascus, where he was kept till Al-Welid's decease. The perfidy of Ḳoteiba towards Nīzak was so gross, that the Muslim public, though not unused to guile in war, was scandalised, and upbraided him for it. Another painful, but less inexcusable, incident occurred about the same time. On Nizak's defeat, the king of Jūzajan, a member of the coalition, sought terms of peace, which being granted, Ḳoteiba invited him to his camp, sending one Ḥabīb as a hostage, and taking hostages in return. The king died while in Ḳoteiba's camp; and his subjects, suspecting foul play, put Ḥabīb to death; upon which Ḳoteiba retaliated by slaying the native hostages to a man. Having pushed his conquests still further into

A.H. 86-96.

Rising in the East.

[1] The countries named as furnishing help and joining in the rising, are — Ispahbad, Badhan, Merv ar-Rud, Taliḳan, Faryāb, and Jūzajān.

[2] Some traditions say 12,000; but these reports must be taken *cum grano*. The popular voice ran strongly against Ḳoteiba's treachery, and would be inclined to exaggerate.

A.H. 86-96. Sogdiana,[1] Koteiba returned by Bokhara to Merv. Next year he proceeded to Sijistan against Zunbil, but was set free by the conclusion of peace with that potentate.

92 A.H.

Campaign against Samarkand, 93 A.H.

In 93 A.H. Koteiba again crossed the Oxus, and marched on Khwarizm, the Shah having offered him 10,000 cattle if he would deliver him from a rebellious brother. The rebels were routed, and 4,000 prisoners put to death. The brother and his followers were made over to the Shah, who slew them and conferred their property on Koteiba, who was now recalled by the news that Samarkand had thrown off the Muslim yoke. Making a rapid descent upon it, Koteiba thus in a speech addressed his troops:—"The wretched Soghdians are verily fallen into our hands; they have broken their treaty with us, as ye have heard; and truly the Lord will deliver Khwarizm and Soghd unto us, even as He delivered the Beni Kureiza and the Nadir into the hands of the Prophet." The city held out long, and engines had to be brought up to batter the walls. Fearing an assault, the King sued for terms. Koteiba agreed to retire on a heavy tribute and quota of horsemen; but first he must enter, build a Mosque, and inaugurate religious service in it; after that he would evacuate the place. He entered. The fire-temples were destroyed and the images burned, but the city was kept and not according to promise restored.[2] Koteiba's repeated perfidy was much spoken against; and some Syrian is said to have prophesied, but too truly, that the Caliphate would yet pay the penalty, and Damascus be ravaged by these wild Turkomans. Meantime the conqueror's hand fell

[1] The King of Shumán had expelled the Muslim residents, thinking his fortress impregnable. It was stormed by catapults, which must have been very effective, as the missiles entered the king's chamber. Kish and Nasaf were overrun; Faryáb offering opposition, was ravaged and set on fire, so that it was called "the burned land." The males were all put to death, and the women taken captive.

[2] Two Jewish tribes removed from Medina. *Life of Muhammad*, pp. 281 ff., 318.

[3] One of the idols was held so sacred that anyone who touched it would immediately die. Koteiba seized a torch, and with a loud Tekbir set it on fire: the golden nails in it weighed 50,000 mithkals. A granddaughter of Yezdegird, taken captive here, was sent to Damascus, and taken into the royal *harím*. Al-Welíd had a daughter by her.

PERSIA,
AND
KHORASAN.
Scale of Statute Miles
0 50 100 200
45
50
55
40
35
30
25
Caucasus Mts
CASPIAN SEA
T U
ARMENIA
AZERBIJAN
Ardebil
Jurjan
Tabaristan
Demavend
TEHERAN
Reiy
KHORA
L. Zab R.
Holwan
Khanikin
Jalula
Nahrawan
Bagdad
MEDAIN
BABYLON
Mt Elvand
Hamadan
Nihavend
IRAK AJEMI
IRAK
ARABI
Kufa
Kaskar
Wasit
Khafran
Euphrates
Sus
Jundai Sabur
Tostar
Ispahan
PERSI
KHUZISTAN
The Delta
Ahwaz
Rum Hormuz
Basra
Hafir
Istakhr
(Persepolis)
Shiraz
FARS
KIRMA
Nefud
HEJER
PERSIAN GULF
Katif
Daba
OMAN

Stanford's Geogl. Estabt. London

heavily on Samarḳand. Muslim families brought from Khorāsān in great numbers were settled there: fire-houses and idol-temples were destroyed; the natives were all disarmed and no heathen dared remain in the town overnight. Bokhārā and Khwarizm were similarly colonised; and these three places became famous in the after history of Islām. A.H. 86-96.

Ḳoteiba's last campaign on the borders of China, 94-96 A.H.

During the next two or three years, aided by large contingents of horse from the tribes he had subdued (the favourite policy in the East of using subject peoples to rivet their own chain[1]), Ḳoteiba pushed his conquests forward, taking Khojanda, Shāsh, and other cities of Ferghāna, till he reached Kāshghār and the confines of China. A curious tale is told of an interview with "the King of China,"—probably a border Mandarin,—who, to release Ḳoteiba from an oath that he would take possession of the land, sent him a load of Chinese soil to trample on, a bag of Chinese coin by way of tribute, and four royal youths on whom to imprint his seal. Ḳoteiba had now reached the limit of his conquests. While on this campaign he received tidings of the Caliph's death: suddenly the scene is changed and his future, as we shall see, all overcast.

Campaign of Ibn Ḳāsim on the Indus, 89-96 A.H. 708-715 A.D.

Like Ḳoteiba in Central Asia, Moḥammad ibn al-Ḳāsim of the Thaḳif tribe, cousin of Al-Ḥajjāj and governor of Makrān, was the first great conqueror on the Indian border. With a well-appointed army of 6000 men, he advanced on Sind and laid siege to its capital, Deibul.[2] A catapult named *the Bride*, worked by 500 men, laid waste the city, and a stone shot from it overthrew the pinnacle of the famous temple of Al-Budd [Buddha], from which flaunted its great red flag. The omen struck terror into the enemy; the King fled, and Ibn al-Ḳasim, leaving a garrison in the city, pursued him across the Mihrān (Indus), where, surrounded by his elephants, he was slain in a severe engagement. His wife and maidens, rather than suffer dishonour, set fire to their palace, and were consumed with

[1] In 95 A.H., 20,000 native levies are said to have followed Ḳoteiba from Bokhārā Kish, Nasaf, and Khwarizm.

[2] Sind is only old Persian for Hind. Deibul was at this time the Indian port best known to the Arabs at the principal mouth of the Indus. It now lies far inland, 45 miles E.S.E. from Kurāchi.—Le Strange, p. 331.

A.H. 86-96.

all their treasure. Then the conqueror took Brahmanabad by storm,[1] and having made terms with Ror, crossed the Bayás and invested Al-Multán, which after a prolonged siege, the water having failed, surrendered at discretion. The fighting men were put to the sword, and their families, with the crowd of attendants on the shrine of Buddha, made captive. Al-Multán was then a centre of pilgrimage, people coming from all quarters to worship the idol. It was "the Gateway of India and the House of Gold." The spoil was incredible, and double the whole cost of the expedition, which was estimated by Al-Hajjáj at sixty million pieces. While Ibn al-Kasim rested here, enjoying the fruits of his splendid conquests, tidings of Al-Walíd's decease arrested his further progress eastward. He was recalled to Al-'Irák, where, with certain other adherents of Al-Hajjáj, he was put to the torture and died.

Multán taken.

Progress of Muslim arms in India, 100-125 A.H. 718-742 A.D.

With Ibn al-Athír, we may here anticipate a few years further the Muslim rule in India. Habíb, one of Al-Muhallab's family (on which now shone the sun of courtly favour), as governor of Sind, fixed his court at Ror, and allowed the princes displaced by Ibn al-Kasim to return, as protected, to their several States. The pious 'Omar II. summoned them to embrace Islam, on which they received Arabian names. In the days of Hishám, a little later, Junéid pushed the Muslim bounds still farther east. But the prestige of Islam again waned for a time. Most of the princes relapsed into heathenism, and to hold them in check, the fortified camp Al-Mahfúza (*the Protected*) was founded, from which expeditions, both naval and military, were sent forth. "Things, however," says our Historian, "remained in India on a weak and feeble footing until the blessed accession of the 'Abbásids."

Heathenism and idolatry tolerated in India.

It should be noted here that in India there was an altogether new departure in the treatment of the subject races. Idolatry was tolerated. Temples were left standing, and their worship not disallowed. By Mohammadan law, Jews and Christians might continue to profess their faith under Muslim rule; and even Parsees were, by a

[1] Two parasangs from the later Al-Mansúra "the Victorious." Spoken of as in the hilly country of Belúchistán.

strained interpretation, brought within the exemption,[1] as followers of the "Book" of Zoroaster. But idolaters were to be pursued to the bitter end, and utterly rooted out. Such, the plain teaching of the Ḳor'an, had been the habitual policy hitherto—the policy still, as we have seen, pursued in Central Asia. But in India a new leaf was turned. As Weil remarks—"It no longer was a holy war—with the view, that is to say, of the conversion of the heathen. That object was now dropped. Side by side with Allah, idols might be worshipped, if only tribute were duly paid." And thus, even under Mohammadan rule, India remained largely a pagan land. A.H. 86-96.

Throughout this reign Muslim armies, commanded generally by leaders of the royal blood, made yearly inroads into Armenia and Asia Minor, which the Greeks, from reverses nearer home, were little able to withstand. In the year 89 A.H. a campaign against the Turks on the Caspian was undertaken with notable success. But all other conquests of this reign fade before the conquest of Spain. That was a victory which, though demanding a separate chapter for itself, we must be here content to treat in briefest outline. Progress in Armenia and Asia Minor.

Musa ibn Noṣair, a Yemeni, was, in 89 A.H., appointed governor of the Mediterranean coast to the west of Egypt, by 'Abd al-'Aziz, uncle of the Caliph and ruler of Egypt, of which "Africa"[2] was a dependency. His predecessor had already retrieved the disasters that successively befell the Muslim army at Ḳairawan: and Mūsa, having consolidated his power in the older districts, now, with the aid of his two sons, pushed the Muslim conquests to the Farthest West. In successive engagements at Sūs and Tlemsen, he completely overthrew the Berbers, took incredible multitudes prisoners,[3] and at last brought the native population, even to the bounds Campaign of Mūsa in Western Africa, 89 A.H. 708 A.D.

[1] *Life of Mohammad*, p. 456 f.

[2] "Africa" was the name for the Muslim conquests stretching westward from Egypt to the Atlantic. More strictly Ifriḳiya denotes the Roman province of Africa or Tunis.

[3] The fifth of the captives, the share of the state, amounted to 60,000; —the entire number being thus 300,000 - the greatest, our historian adds, ever known. But the traditions regarding Musa are liable to a touch of romance.

A.H. 86-96. of Morocco, under his authority. Opposition ended, "Readers of the Kor'an" were appointed to instruct the people in the faith.[1] Naval expeditions were also set on foot, and successful descents made on Majorca and Sardinia.[2] Having established his freedman Tarik at Tangier, as lieutenant over the newly conquered districts in the west, Mūsa returned to his head-quarters at Ḳairawān.

Mūsa's designs on Spain, 90 A.H. 709 A.D.

The kingdom of Spain was at this period ruled by Roderic, a usurper, to whom Count Julian, ruler of the coast lying over against Tangier, was bitterly opposed.[3] Ceuta, on the African side, was part also of Julian's domain. It occurred to him that with the help of the invaders from the East, he might now drive the usurper from the throne.

90 A.H. Entering therefore into friendly relations with Mūsa, he explained at an interview, the ease with which the narrow strait might be crossed; and Mūsa, nothing loth, was lured by the inviting prospect of a campaign in Spain. The Caliph, fearing the sea, at the first hesitated; but when it was explained how close was the opposite shore,

Descent of Ṭarīf, x. 91 A.H. July, 710 A.D.; he gave consent. Next year, by way of trial, Mūsa sent a few hundred men in four ships under command of Tarif, a Berber slave of his, who made an easy descent on the near coast at the Cape that still bears his name, and returned with a spoil so rich that the army longed to repeat the attack upon a larger scale. Mūsa, thus emboldened, placed a force of 7000 men, chiefly Berbers and freedmen, with some Arabs, at the disposal of Tarik,

and of Ṭāriḳ, vii. 92 A.H. April, 711 A.D. who, crossing the straits, took possession of the fortress called after him, Gibraltar.[4] From thence he ravaged

[1] A few years further on we are told that by 100 A.H. "the whole of the Berbers were converted to Islām."

[2] A long account is given of the capture of its harbour, 92 A.H.; of the recovery of treasure cast into the sea, and secreted in the roof of the great church; and of the riches of the spoil. Other descents are mentioned 135 and 323 A.H., and finally in 400, when, however, the Muslim fleet of 120 ships was discomfited; after which no attempts were made on the island.

[3] The daughters of the Spanish nobles used to be sent to Court to be educated; and Roderic, we are told, had taken advantage of it to dishonour Julian's daughter, which was the cause of this bitterness. Gibbon rejects the story, and Hallam also is so inclined; but for our story it is immaterial.

[4] Jebel-Ṭāriḳ, the hill of Ṭāriḳ.

the adjacent country of Algeciras,[1] when Roderic, receiving tidings of the descent, hastened to repel the invader. Ṭārik, apprised of this through Julian and his followers, appealed for additional troops to Mūsa, who sent him 5000 Arabs. Thus reinforced, Ṭārik was able now, with 12,000 men, to hold his ground against the great army of Roderic. They met on the banks of the Guadalete, to the north of Medina Sidonia. For a week the issue was uncertain. But there was treachery in the Spanish camp. The numerous party opposed to Roderic, buoyed with the hope that the Arabs, satiated with spoil, would soon recross the sea and leave the throne to its proper claimant, fought feebly, and at last gave way. The Spanish force was routed, and Roderic in his flight drowned. But the spoil had not the effect expected. Instead of retiring, the Arabs, flushed with victory, stormed Ecija; and, daily swelled by fresh contingents scenting from afar a rich reward, spread themselves over the land. Malaga and Granada were captured and the province overrun. The people everywhere fled to the hills and fortresses, vainly fancied impregnable; and all the quicker, at the fearful report spread by the conquerors themselves that they fed on human flesh. Leaving Cordova besieged by one of his generals, Ṭarik, guided still by Julian, hastened to Toledo, the capital, which to his astonishment he found deserted by all but Jews. These, delivered from Christian thraldom, now threw in their lot with the invaders (how different from the days of Mohammad!), and were placed in charge of cities which the conquerors found themselves too few to occupy. The inhabitants had all fled in terror, some as far even as Galicia. But it was by no means the policy of the Arabs to make the land a desert. And so the people were gradually tempted back by promise of security, toleration for their religion if only preached unostentatiously, and the establishment of Christian courts. In a city beyond the hills, carried there perhaps for safety, a relic beyond all value fell into Ṭārik's hands, the famous *Table of Solomon*, set with pearls and rubies and all manner of precious stones, and having 360 feet.[2] With this priceless jewel

A.H. 86-96.

Ṭārik's victories, end of ix. 92 A.H.

Toledo taken.

Table of Solomon, 93 A.H.

[1] Al-Jezīra, Arabic for *peninsula*.

[2] Tab. ii. 1254.

A.H. 86-96. Tarik returned to Toledo, having within the short space of two years reduced the greater part of Spain, and put every enemy to flight that dared to meet him in the field.[1]

Descent of Mūsa, ix. 93 A.H. June, 712 A.D.

The splendid exploits of his lieutenant aroused the jealousy of Mūsa. To rival his success he set out himself with a large force and many warriors of note, and landed in Spain, 93 A.H. Guided in a course which Julian promised him would eclipse the glory of Tarik, he struck out a new line of victory, stormed Sidonia, Carmona, and the ancient capital Seville. Merida was laid siege to, and the walls battered by engines. It resisted many months, and the garrison fought with desperate bravery. A spot, our Historian tells us, was still in his day called the "Martyrs' bastion," where a column of Muslims was cut to pieces by a party issuing from a hole beneath the wall. At last the city fell, and Musa, on the way to Toledo, met Tarik at Talavera. He received him angrily, struck him on the head with his whip, and demanded an account of the booty. Friendly relations restored, the famous table was given up to Musa.[2] The generals then separated, Tarik for Saragossa, and Mūsa for Salamanca and Astorga.

Merida, 94 A.H.

Saragossa.

Saragossa held out long, and it was not till Musa had rejoined his lieutenant there that by their united efforts it was stormed. Musa then continued his victorious progress to the extreme north-east of Spain, and occupying Tarragona and Barcelona, reached as far even as to Gerona, on the border of France. There, tradition says, he was confronted by an image with the words engraved, "*Sons of Ismaïl hitherto and no farther—Return!*" and so he turned back.[3] Tarik, taking a more southerly course, overran the entire coast, reducing Tortosa on the Ebro, Valencia, and other leading cities on his way.

[1] On the Muslims in Europe, see S. P. Scott, *History of the Moorish Empire in Europe*.

[2] One of the feet was wanting, supplied by a golden substitute. More of this in note below.

[3] The tradition is curiously prolepsic, and shows how fable often enters our annals. The words given are: "Sons of Ismāʿīl! here is your limit. Go back! And if ye ask why, I tell you, that otherwise ye shall return to discord among yourselves, so that ye shall slay and behead one another."

A.H. 86-96.

Mūsa recalled, 95 A.H. 713 A.D.

The tidings of Ṭarik's ill-treatment by Mūsa had meanwhile reached the Caliph, who, displeased at it, and not unlikely jealous of his viceroy's independent attitude, sent a messenger to recall him to Damascus. The summons met him on a new campaign to the West. Bidding the messenger fall into his train, Mūsa continued his progress of victory and devastation, till entering Galicia, he came in sight of the blue waves of the northern sea.[1] A second messenger followed him to Lugo, with a sterner and immediate mandate. He was turned out of the camp by the imperious conqueror, who now, however, felt that the summons could no longer be disobeyed. Carrying Ṭārik therefore with him, he turned his face southward; and so, marching through the scenes of their unparalleled achievement, the two conquerors made their way back to the straits of Gibraltar. Before quitting Spain, Mūsa placed his son 'Abd al-'Azīz at the head of the government. Two other sons were also put in command, the one at Ḳairawān, the other over Western Africa. Perhaps no family ever enjoyed a wider fame, or power more uncontrolled, than that of Mūsa at the moment.

Mūsa's fall, 96 A.H. 714 A.D.

The marvellous achievements of Mūsa—with but few parallels in history—were sufficient to have disturbed the equilibrium of any mind. But this will hardly excuse the indiscretion which led the recalled conqueror to make his return through Africa a royal and triumphal progress, and thus justify the suspicions which had no doubt already marked him out at Court as a subject of danger. He carried with him countless store of rare and precious things, laden on endless lines of waggons and camels. At Cairo he stayed some time, and distributed rich marks of favour among his friends, especially the family of his patron 'Abd al-'Aziz, the late governor of Egypt, to whom he owed his rise. Progress was thus so slow that he did not reach Damascus till after the death of Al-Welid. The new Caliph, Suleiman, received him coldly, deposed him from all his commands, cast him into prison, and laid such heavy

[1] "Carrying the messenger with him he passed on to new parts, slaying and taking captive, pulling down churches and breaking up their bells, till he reached the high lands overlooking the green ocean. When the second messenger arrived in the city of Lugo, he seized the reins of his mule and marched him out of the camp," etc.

A.H. 86-96.

Mūsa's son murdered, 97 A.H. 715 A.D.

demands upon him, that he was reduced to poverty, and when released, forced to beg from his friends the means of living. To add to his misfortune, his son 'Abd al-'Aziz, whom he had left to succeed him in Spain, was assassinated, as is supposed, but without sufficient grounds by secret orders from Damascus; and the heartless Suleimān sent his head to the father with an insulting message:—"a grievous error on the Caliph's part," justly adds the Arabian annalist. Ṭārik also must have retired into private life, for we hear no more of him. It is sometimes said that Al-Welíd leaned towards Keis and Suleiman towards the Yemens; but their treatment of Mūsa and his son, who were Yemens, shows that their partisanship was not very deep. The fall of both resembles that of Khālid — an ungrateful end for the three great conquerors of their age.[1]

The era of Al-Welíd was glorious both at home and abroad. There is no other reign, not excepting even that of

[1] Another, but more romantic, and less likely, narrative is as follows:—

Mūsa reached Damascus while Al-Welíd was yet alive [which, if we look only to the dates, is not improbable]. He [accused] himself at court, in depreciation of Ṭārik, as the conqueror of Spain; and among the spoils belonging to himself and as such presented to the Caliph, was "Solomon's table." Ṭārik upon this claimed that the prize was his, which Mūsa denied. "Ask him, then," said Ṭārik, "what has become of the lost foot" (see former note). Mūsa could not tell; whereupon Ṭārik, who had kept it by him for just such an occasion, produced the wanting piece. And so Al-Welíd was satisfied that Mūsa had really treated Ṭārik badly.

A curious account is also given of the death of 'Abd al-'Aziz, Mūsa's son. Himself an excellent man, he fell under the influence of Roderic's widow, who persuaded him to adopt the princely habits of the country. His followers being slow to make courtly obeisance (as resembling prostration at prayer), she had a low threshold made, through which all had to stoop as they approached the throne. She also made him wear Roderic's jewelled crown. His followers on this conspired to slay him as a renegade, 97 A.H. Others held that Suleiman, probably fearing that 'Abd al-'Aziz might assume regal and independent power, sent orders for his death at the time his father came to grief at court, and that his enemies fell upon him as he was praying in his chamber with the Kor'ān before him. "When the head was sent to his father with the Caliph's cruel question, 'Dost thou recognise it?' he exclaimed —'Welcome to thy martyrdom, my son; for truly they did slay thee in thy piety and uprightness.' And it was counted as one of Suleiman's chief misdeeds."

'Omar, in which Islām so spread abroad and was consolidated. We may safely accept the judgment of the impartial Weil, who tells us that, "although Muslim historians, because of his supporting Al-Ḥajjāj, call Al-Welīd a tyrant, he is in our eyes the greatest, and in every respect the most powerful and illustrious, ruler amongst all the Commanders of the Faithful." From the borders of China and the banks of the Indus to the Atlantic, his word was law. In his reign culture and the arts began to flourish. He enlarged the Mosque of Damascus by taking in the Church of St John from the Christians. From a church in Baalbek he took a gilded dome of brass and set it over the rock in 'Abd al-Melik's Mosque in Jerusalem. He rebuilt and enlarged the Mosque of Medīna and the Aḳṣā Mosque in Jerusalem.[1] He established schools and hospitals, and made provision for the aged, blind, and lame. He frequently visited the markets; and so encouraged manufacture and design, that people began to take an interest in their advancement. Roads, with wells at convenient stations, were made throughout the kingdom, and the comfort of travellers, notably of pilgrims to the Holy Places, specially cared for. More perhaps than any other Caliph, he knew how to hold the balance between the Arabian tribal rivalries, and ruled at large with a powerful hand. If Al-Ḥajjāj be an exception, Al-Welīd, at the least, held him in better check than did his predecessor. Looking at it from first to last, we shall not find in the annals of the Caliphate a more glorious reign than that of Al-Welīd.

A.H. 86-96.

Grandeur of Welīd's reign.

As a proof of his mildness and consideration, it is told of him that when in 91 A.H. on pilgrimage, he visited Medīna and made large presents to the people, the court of the Mosque was cleared of worshippers, that in company with 'Omar he might inspect at leisure the improvements he had made. One old man alone would neither rise up nor salute the Caliph. 'Omar tried to divert the attention of his cousin from the uncourtly worshipper; but Al-Welīd saw, and at once recognised him. "How art thou, Sa'īd?" cried the Caliph. Without the slightest movement or salutation, the aged man replied:—"Very well, I am thankful to say, and

Welīd mild and condescending.

[1] See Le Strange, *Palestine under the Muslims*, p. 557 f.; *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, vol. iv., by H. I. Bell, No. 1403.

A.H. 86-96. how doth the Commander of the Faithful?" "The last of his race!" exclaimed Al-Welîd, in admiration of the fast vanishing homeliness and simplicity which others might have rebuked as uncourtly rudeness.

Death of Welîd, vi. 96 A.H. Feb., 715 A.D.

It has been already noticed that Al-Welîd wished to displace his brother Sulaimân from being heir-apparent, in favour of his own son. He died before the change could be accomplished; but the effect was not the less to create an intense feeling of resentment in the mind of Sulaimân, especially towards Kotaiba and the adherents of Al-Hajjâj, both of whom had encouraged Al-Welîd in his design.

Al-Welîd was about forty years old at his death, and he had reigned nearly ten years.

Naval affairs.

By this time the Naval Administration of the Caliphate was fairly well organised. The fleet was divided into five squadrons, those of Syria with headquarters at Laodicea, Africa (that is, Tunis), Egypt (with Alexandria as starting-point), the Nile (with headquarters at Babylon), and a special squadron to guard the mouths of the Nile from descents upon the coast by Byzantines. For Egypt the chief arsenals and shipbuilding yards were at Babylon and Clysma. The superintendents of Alexandria, Rosetta, and Damietta were, at the end of the first century, Christians. The ships' companies were divided into sailors and marines. They were all Muslims. The former, who comprised the rowers and helmsmen, were mostly Mawâli or native converts to Islam, both Copts and Greeks. The latter were Arab settlers in the country, mainly of Koreish and the Ansâr. Both were conscripts, but the latter certainly, and the former probably, received pensions out of the public revenues. It is noteworthy that the expeditions were made in winter.

Arab rule in Egypt.

Arab rule in Egypt appears to have come as a relief to the country as a whole. No doubt taxation was heavy, but it was probably less so than under Byzantine rule, and Egypt is capable of bearing heavy taxation. Moreover, when an Arab governor is denounced as rapacious and tyrannical, it is often, as the papyri show, because he vindicated the rights of the poor as against the great. This is especially shown to be so in the case of Kurra ibn Sharîk, who was governor about this time. The Arab historians themselves also, writing as they are under the 'Abbasids,

are apt to paint Umeiyad rule in dark colours. The insurrection of the Copts in the year 725-726 (107 A.H.) was due to a defect in the system rather than to harshness in its administration. For as the Copts went over one by one to Islām, and so became legally exempt from taxation, the number of tax-payers was always dwindling whilst the amount to be raised was steadily increasing. The tolerance of the Arabs appears from the fact that the governor's rescripts are still written in Greek (as well as Arabic) and replies made in Coptic. Many of the Pagarchs were Christians and all the subordinate officials. The government clerks were not required to use Muslim formulæ in their letters, and the sign of the Cross was allowed. Indeed, how little the Arabs cared for the letter of their religion appears from the fact that the seal of 'Amr bore the impress of a steer.[1] There was no religious persecution; the raids of external foes from without ceased; and the cornering of wheat was made impossible.[2] A.H. 86-96.

[1] This is a rather awkward fact for the critics of the Old Testament. The Arab governors, no doubt, made use of the seals of their Greek predecessors. A common representation is that of (apparently) a wolf, facing towards the right, with a star in front or above. See H. I. Bell, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, vol. iv., p. 432; Karabacek, *Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer: Führer durch die Ausstellung*, p. 148.

[2] See *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, by H. I. Bell, vol. iv., pp. xxxii ff.

CHAPTER LII

SULEIMÂN

96-99 A.H. 715-717 A.D.

Suleimân, 96 A.H. 715 A.D.

SULEIMAN succeeded at once to the throne. It went as a saying at Damascus that Al-Welîd's turn was for art; Suleiman's for the *harîm* and good living; 'Omar's the next to follow) for devotion. The fashion of the Court changed accordingly. With the first, the talk was of culture; with the second, of slave-girls, marriage, and divorce; with the third, of austerity, and recitation of the Kor'an by night. The prowess of the Empire waned under Suleiman. He was called, indeed, the Key of Blessing,—but only because he nominated 'Omar for his successor.

Declension in Spain and the East.

Suleimân weakened the administration of Spain by conniving at,—if indeed he did not actually order,—the murder of 'Abd al-'Aziz, the able follower of his father Musa; the Christians, profiting by the neglect that followed, rose upon their conquerors in the Asturias, and the mountainous region in the north. Mohammad ibn al-Kasim, the successful invader of India, recalled as a follower of the hated Al-Hajjâj, came to an evil end. And under one of the sons of Al-Muhallab the Azdi (now the favoured house) who succeeded, the progress of Islam in the far East slackened, and its prestige declined.

Rebellion and end of Koteiba, 97 A.H.

With Koteiba, the death of Al-Welîd caused the utmost consternation. Appointed by Al-Hajjâj, he well knew the bitterness of Suleimân towards all his adherents, and the danger in which they stood from the enmity of Yezid, the favourite of the day. In an evil hour he set up for himself, and called on the army to join him against the Government. But miscounting his influence, he fatally overshot the mark.

The Azd were his enemies all through, and he had deeply offended Temīm. Fighting thus with but a scanty following, he was slain, and his head, with those of eleven of his brethren, sent a welcome offering to the Caliph. And so the conqueror of Bokhārā, Samarḳand, and Kāshghar, came to an untimely and dishonoured end. It was said of him by a Turk, *Ḳoteiba at the world's end was more terrible to us than Yezīd at our very door.* He had been one of the greatest heroes of Islām, were not his name stained by treachery and bloodshed, and his career cut short by a heedless rebellion. A.H. 96-99.

Yezīd son of Al-Muhallab, the Caliph's minion, was at first appointed to Al-'Irāḳ, but unwilling to incur unpopularity in collecting the severe assessments of Al-Ḥajjāj, which barely sufficed for the now lavish expenditure at Damascus, he obtained the nomination of a financial officer to undertake the ungrateful task. He was Ṣāliḥ ibn 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, the Maulà of Sijistān, who had procured the change of language in the government offices. Finding, however, the exchequer thus closed against his own extravagance, Yezīd prevailed on the Caliph, by the vain boast that his conquests would cast Koteiba's into the shade, to give him Khorāsān. With him, the Azd again come to power, and Temīm take second rank. He also introduced Syrian government troops into Khorāsān, a thing which Al-Ḥajjāj had not done. Arriving at Merv nearly a year after the outbreak of Ḳoteiba, he felt bound to make good his boast; and casting aside his luxuries, took the lead of an immense army, recruited chiefly from Syria and Al-'Irāḳ. His efforts were directed to Jurjān, on the south-eastern recess of the Caspian Sea, which, as we have seen, had been overrun by Sa'īd ibn al-'Āṣ so long ago as the reign of 'Othmān. But though tributary in name, the native rulers, conscious of their strength, were ever withholding payment of their dues, and no one dared to set foot within that inaccessible and rebellious region. This region formed a barrier to communication between Al-'Irāḳ and Merv, and a southern circuit had consequently to be made by troops and travellers for Central Asia. It was therefore an important object to reduce the intervening space. Starting from Merv, Yezīd first attacked Jurjān; and its defenders were driven back into their defiles, where, after suffering much hardship, they came to terms. Here

Yezīd succeeds in 'Irāḳ, 96 A.H.; and Korāsān, 98 A.H.

A.H. 96-99. Yezid's campaign in Jurjān and Tabaristān, 98 A.H. 716 A.D.

Yezid gave first proof that he might vie with Kotēība in cruelty as well as conquest; for although all who had made terms were spared, the country was ravaged, innumerable captives taken, and multitudes slain in cold blood.[1] Leaving 4000 in Jurjān, he marched south-west to Tabaristān, where the Prince, notwithstanding help from Jilān and the Deilem, was discomfited and driven into the hills. Thither the Muslims following were drawn within dangerous defiles, whence, severely punished, they were pursued again into the plain. This reverse encouraged the men of Jurjān, breaking their treaty, to fall upon the garrison, and slay them to a man. Alarmed at his rear being thus cut off from Merv, Yezid made peace with Tabaristān; and turning back again to Jurjān, swore a great oath (similar to that of Khālid) that he would not stay his sword till he had eaten bread of corn ground by the blood of his enemies. The city, strongly planted on an eminence, held out for seven months, and then fell into the hands of the inhuman conqueror, who, butchering thousands of his victims in an adjoining valley, turned the stream upon a mill that overlooked the ghastly scene, and so fulfilled his oath. He also lined the approaches to the city on the right hand and on the left, for miles, with impaled bodies.[2] Yezid returning to Merv, reported his success to the Caliph, and with a vainglorious boast magnified the booty into an enormous sum, such as would have yielded four million dirhems for the fifth.[3]

His cruelty in Jurjān.

Unsuccessful attack on Constantinople, 96-98 A.H. 714-716 A.D.

To counterbalance the victories in Central Asia, Sulaimān had the mortification of finding the vast preparations made to storm Constantinople useless. Shortly before his death, Al-Walīd had fitted out a fleet to attack the Byzantine capital by sea, while columns from Armenia and Asia Minor co-operated by land. Everything appeared to favour the project. Rebellion at home had paralysed the Greek power, while the disloyalty of Leo the Isaurian, who joined hands with Maslama the Caliph's brother in command, afforded the

[1] Tradition places the number at 14,000, which seems hardly credible.

[2] Tradition varies as to the numbers from 12,000 to 40,000; but here again the statement seems incredible.

[3] Another tradition says six million. His secretary warned him of the danger of making so extravagant an estimate, a warning which, as we shall see, was not misplaced.

best prospect of success. Unexpectedly, Leo himself was raised to the throne, and threw the unnatural alliance over. The Muslim troops on both sides of the Bosphorus were defeated, and suffered such hardship from hunger, frost, and pestilence, that after lying before Constantinople for a year, the fleet was forced to retire, and the invasion came to a disastrous and inglorious end. *Greek fire* played a not inconsiderable part in the defeat. A.H. 96-99. 98 A.H.

Suleimān retained as Caliph his residence at Ramleh in Palestine, but made frequent excursions to Dābiḳ, the base of the army operating against Constantinople, and there he died early in 99 A.H. A son, nominated his successor, died before him. On his deathbed the Caliph wished to appoint another son, a minor; but he was persuaded by the saintly Rajā ibn Ḥayā, whose influence had been felt under the two preceding reigns also, to name instead 'Omar, son of his uncle 'Abd al-'Azīz, so long governor of Egypt, and after him his brother Yezid, to succeed. For the nomination of 'Omar, the memory of Suleimān is blessed, though he himself receives but little other praise.[1] Death of Suleimān, ii. 99 A.H. Sept., 717 A.D.

Suleimān was not only cruel but dissolute and jealous; and as such was used to guard his *ḥarīm* by a watch of Suleimān cruel and dissolute.

[1] The following incident illustrates his heartless cruelty, and how the manners of his Court did but follow suit. On pilgrimage to Mecca, he halted at Medīna, where a convoy of 400 Greek captives were brought into his camp. Doomed to death, they were ranged before the royal assembly for the courtiers and poets in the Caliph's train, by way of sport, to try their hands upon. The turn came to Al-Farazdaḳ, the poet, who was handed a sword the worse for wear. Once and again the blow failed of its effect, whereat the Caliph and those around him jeered. Upbraided thus for his awkwardness, Al-Farazdaḳ cast the sword away, and extemporised some couplets which turned the laugh aside. The poetry is indubitable evidence of the cruel tale being founded on fact. The point of it lies in this, that a somewhat corresponding failure had once been experienced by a chief of the Beni 'Abs. These were the maternal relatives of the Caliph, who, joining their master, had exposed Al-Farazdaḳ to the ridicule of the company; and so he adroitly turned the laugh against them in his stinging verses, which ridiculed the failure of their own chieftain.

The first captive brought up, a Patrician, was assigned as a mark of honour to a great grandson of 'Ali, to behead. The poet Jarīr was also honoured with a captive of rank. It is almost incredible that such heartless despite should have been shown towards human life. But so we read, and that without any comment or expression of surprise.

A.H. 96-99. eunuchs. Handsome in mien and feature, it is related of him that at Dabil, arrayed in a green robe and turban, he looked at himself in the mirror, and said, "Am I not the kingly youth?" A slave-girl stood admiring by. "What thinkest thou?" he said to her. "I was thinking," she sang in plaintive verse, "that thou art the best of joys, if thou wouldest but remain; yet for mankind there is no continuing here. No blemish can I see in thee that is in other men, excepting only that thou, like them, must pass away." And he died within the week—having reigned two years and a half.

CHAPTER LIII

'OMAR II

99-101 A.H. 717-720 A.D.

If Suleiman differed from Al-Welid, 'Omar differed incomparably more, not only from both, but also from all other Caliphs both before and after him. An unaffected piety, tinged albeit with bigotry, led to uprightness, moderation, simplicity of life, and to a rule that was eminently just and peaceful. On assuming the Caliphate, the royal grooms brought before him the prancing steeds of the court stables to choose from; but he preferred his own modest equipage. He bade his wife surrender to the treasury the costly jewels given her by her father, 'Abd al-Melik, else he could no longer live with her; and she obeyed. On 'Omar's death, her brother Yezid succeeding to the throne, offered to restore them, but she, mindful of her husband's wish, declined. Calling his other wives and slave-girls to him, 'Omar told them, that as now he had to bear the weight of empire, they must no longer expect from him the same attention and benevolence as before, but it was open to them to leave: they wept, and all declared that they would not be parted from him. In his first oration he invited only those to join his company who would help in doing that which was just and right. Poets, orators, and such like soon found that his court was no place for them, while it was thronged by godly and devout divines. His pious scruples led him sometimes into acts of questionable expediency. The demesnes at Fadak, reserved by the Prophet for public charity,[1] but some time back wrongfully appropriated by Merwan for the expenses of the court, were now, against

'Omar II., ii. 99 A.H. Sept., 717 A.D.

[1] *Life of Moḥammad*, pp. 503, 536.

A.H. 99-101.

the ruling of Abu Bekr, handed over to the family of 'Ali; their properties in Mecca were restored to the family of Talha; and these, with other resumptions of the kind, created ill-feeling in the royal house. His devotion to Islam prejudiced him against the employment of Jews and Christians; and in a rescript addressed to his lieutenants he bade them exalt the true faith, abase all others, and appoint none but Muslims to offices of trust—quoting verses of the Kor'an in support of his command.[1] The Mawali, or new converts, of Khorasan, who took part in the wars, were put on a level with the Mukatila, or fighting Arabs—that is, they were exempt from taxes and received pensions. He restored to the children also of the Mukatila the pensions which had been curtailed by Mu'awiya and withheld by 'Abd al-Melik. The tithes of the province of 'Oman were returned to that province for distribution amongst its poor. He was also hard and unpitiful in exacting from those of other creeds the severest burdens it was lawful to impose. But whatever the bigotry or even fanaticism of his rule, and however much he may have sought to proselytise by favouring the religion of Islam, his justice in administering the law according to its dictates, was surpassed by none. When appealed to by the Christians of Damascus to give them back the Church of St John turned by Al-Welid into the city Mosque—though unable to concede their request, he allowed them to retain the Church of St Thomas, which was not theirs by right. The people of Nejran, who had, by a breach of faith, been transplanted by 'Omar I. to near Al-Kufa, and on whom Mohammad had laid a tribute of 2000 pieces of cloth (80,000 dirhems), had decreased in numbers by war and conversions. 'Othmân had granted them a rebate of 200 pieces, and Mu'awiya of a further 200. Both these were re-imposed by Al-Hajjâj. By the time of 'Omar II., their numbers had fallen from 40,000 to 4000. 'Omar II. therefore reduced the tribute from 2000 pieces of cloth to 200.

Pious and bigoted, but just.

Discontinues imprecation on 'Ali.

Hitherto in the public prayers on Friday throughout the Empire, a petition cursing 'Ali had been in use. The later historians say this was now withdrawn. A sense of duty may have led to this action, justified by a passage in the Kor'an, which enjoins justice and kindness towards

[1] Sûras iii. 114, and v. 54.

relatives.[1] When a schoolboy at Medīna, the practice had been denounced to him by a holy man, whose teaching he adopted, and never departed from. 'Omar had urged his father to discontinue it when Governor of Egypt; but he replied that the cessation, however otherwise right and proper, would damage the Umeiyad reign, and favour transfer of the Caliphate to the house of 'Alī. The imprecation was resumed after 'Omar's death. But its temporary abolition, whilst conciliating the feelings of the adherents of the house of 'Alī towards 'Omar himself, did no doubt stimulate the movement now taking shape against the ruling dynasty. A.H. 99-101.

The Khawarij.

It says much for 'Omar's government that the Khawarij under his Caliphate did not unsheathe the sword. Sending for their leaders to argue their grievances and traitorous tenets with them, he heard their scruples patiently and answered them as far as he could. What troubled him most was their plea that, though he himself was orthodox and saintly, yet the godless Yezīd would succeed him. 'Omar could only answer that with succession to the throne he could not interfere, as it had been so provided by the same authority from which his own title was derived. The faction was stimulated by 'Omar's concessions to their prejudices; and equally so were the Umeiyad family troubled at his attitude, as dangerous to their dynasty.[2]

Efforts at conversion in Africa and Spain.

There is not much to record of adventure, military or administrative, in the reign of 'Omar. His first concern was to bring safely back what remained of the armament so bootlessly launched by his predecessors against Constantinople. Large supplies of food and carriage were sent to Maslama, and the withdrawal was thus successfully carried out. Elsewhere the efforts of 'Omar were mainly marked by endeavours to convert the nations to Islam. Among the Berbers these were most successful. But in Spain the task was not so easy; and therefore, to reduce the influence of the Christians, their lands were divided amongst the conquerors. A royal Mosque was also

[1] Sūra xvi. 92.

[2] It is even asserted that they set one to poison his drink, and that of this he died. But this is not consistent with other traditions, and looks like a fabrication of the 'Abbasid enemies of the Umeiyad line.

A.H. 99-101.

founded, in this reign, at Saragossa. To promote conversion in the East, 'Omar addressed a rescript to the kings of Sind, inviting them to embrace Islam with the promise of thereby enjoying all the privileges and immunities of the Arab race. This they did, and obtained Arabian names, but again, in the reign of Hisham, apostatised.

'Omar II. appointed his governors, not for the party to which they belonged, but for their honesty and trustworthiness. His governors in Al-Ba-ra, 'Adi ibn Artât, and in Mesopotamia, 'Omar ibn Hubeira, both of Fezara, were of Keis; whilst his governor in Spain was a Yemeni, Samh ibn Malik, and in India a brother of Koteiba. He considered the Kadi or judge a more important official than the governor. His Kadi in Al-Basra was the famous Al-Hasan. Unlike his predecessors he did not leave his governors a free hand so long as the taxes came in regularly, but considered himself as responsible for them.

Fall of Yezîd, 99 A.H.

One instance of this conscientiousness was the arraignment of Yezid, son of Al-Muhallab. Even Suleiman is said to have become dissatisfied with his favourite; and 'Omar, regarding him now as a tyrant, summoned him to give an account of his stewardship in Khorasan. Yezid no sooner set foot in Al-'Irak than he was put in chains, and so conducted to Damascus. 'Omar held him to the letter of his reported victories and prize in Central Asia. In vain Yezid protested that the report was made to magnify the achievement in the people's eyes, and that he had never thought of being called to account for the exact amount which he had named. 'Omar would none of the excuse; Yezid must produce a reckoning of the whole, and make good what was due. Finally, he was banished in coarse prison dress to an island in the Red Sea. But warned of his dangerous aims even in that isolated place, the Caliph removed him to Aleppo, where he was kept in strict confinement. His son, whom he had left to take his place at Merv, came to intercede for him, but in vain; and dying shortly after, 'Omar performed the funeral service over him, saying that he was a better man than his father. Yezid had fancied 'Omar to be but a sanctimonious hypocrite; he now found him terribly in earnest; but he had reason to fear his successor even more. On hearing that 'Omar had sickened,

he bribed the guard, and effected his escape to Al-Baṣra, where he raised a dangerous rebellion, as we shall in the sequel see. A.H. 99-101.

Religious policy in Khorāsān.

The policy pursued in Khorāsān and Central Asia after the recall of Yezid is another evidence that the Caliph was more intent on the spread of the Faith than on temporal aggrandisement. There were loud cries of harshness and exaction from the professed converts of Khorāsān. 'Omar sent for a deputation of these to represent their grievances, and finding their complaint well-founded, deposed Al-Jarrāḥ the viceroy, and insisted that all who said the creed, and joined in the religious services, should be exempt from burdens, and placed on the same footing as themselves. To consolidate his rule, he stayed the sword against outlying countries, and called in the garrisons and columns that had been settled in those heathen parts. Throughout all the provinces retained, the people, finding now the comfort and advantages of conversion, began to flock in multitudes to the Faith. At first they were tested by their willingness to be circumcised; but 'Omar hearing of it, forbade a test nowhere enjoined in the Kor'ān; "for Moḥammad," said he, "was sent to call men to the faith, not to circumcise them." To the warning of an Egyptian official that the number of conversions was seriously affecting the revenue, he replied that "God sent His Prophet as a missionary, not a tax-gatherer." At the same time burdens on unbelievers were imposed, as elsewhere, to the utmost, but justice towards them must also be observed. No churches, synagogues, or fire-temples were to be destroyed: but the erection of new ones was forbidden. The policy of 'Omar was thus to fill Khorāsān and the adjoining districts with a population of contented believers; to consolidate the Faith and cast the sword aside. And in this policy so far as his short and transient reign allowed, he was successful.

The revenues.

In spite of his reply to the Egyptian official, 'Omar had to take steps to put a stop to the falling off in the land-tax due to the migration of the peasantry into the towns. His measures were wiser and less violent than those of Al-Ḥajjāj. After consulting the lawyers of Medina, he apparently forbade the sale of taxable land by non-Muslims to Muslims (who paid no tax) after the year 100 A.H. This measure held good

A.H. 99–101.

under the next two Caliphs and then became a dead letter, and at a later period a third expedient was adopted, which still holds good. A difference was declared between Kharaj and Jizya. The former was said by a legal fiction to be paid by the land, and so both Muslims and non-Muslims were liable for it; but the latter was a poll-tax payable only by non-Muslims in return for the protection afforded them by the Muslims. Thus the Muslims were made to contribute to the revenue, and the State did not suffer loss.

Death of a pious son.

A son of seventeen died before him. Some touching passages are related of 'Omar's conversation with this youth, who was like-minded with him in high religious aspiration. He urged his father to enforce reform and bring back society to the primitive practice of what was right. 'Omar replied that he had done what he could by gentle means, but if Muslim rule were to be regenerated as his son desired, it must be accomplished by force; and "there is no good," said he, "in that reform which can be enforced by the sword alone."

Attractive character.

Though devoid of stirring events, there is much that is attractive in the reign of 'Omar. It is a relief, amidst bloodshed, intrigue, and treachery, to find a Caliph devoted to what he believed the highest good both for himself and for his people. The saint might be morbid, over-scrupulous, and bigoted; but there are few, if any, throughout this history whose life leaves a more pleasing impression on the reader's mind than that of 'Omar.

Death of 'Omar II., Rajab, 101 A.H. Feb., 720 A.D.

It was the middle of 101 A.H., after a reign of two years and a half, that 'Omar sickened. In a few weeks he died, at the age of thirty-nine, and was buried at Dair Sim'an, in the province of Hims.[1] He was succeeded, according to his brother Suleiman's last will, by his cousin Yezid, son of 'Abd al-Melik, and of 'Ātika, daughter of Yezid I.

[1] His tomb was not desecrated by the 'Abbāsids like those of the other Umeiyad Caliphs. Mas'ūdī, v. 410. Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems*, pp. 432 f., 497.

CHAPTER LIV

YEZĪD II

101-105 A.H. 720-724 A.D.

THE first event in the reign of Yezīd II. was a serious rising in Al-'Irāḳ—the rebellion, namely, of his namesake, Yezīd son of Al-Muhallab. The accession of the new ruler revived tribal jealousies; for his wife was niece to Al-Ḥajjāj; and so throwing over the Yemeni faction, Yezīd II. took up the cause of the family and adherents of Al-Ḥajjāj, all of whom, as we have seen, had been sorely pursued by Suleimān. Yezīd, Al-Muhallab's son, had, as the favourite of Suleimān, unfortunately as it now turned out for himself, carried out the orders of his patron with great severity; and turning a deaf ear to her cry, had confiscated to a vast amount the wealth which the present Caliph's wife inherited from her father; and so her husband had threatened that if he ever came to power, he would cut him into a thousand pieces. For this reason Yezīd, when he heard of 'Omar's last sickness, and knew that his enemy Yezīd II. must succeed, escaped from prison, and fled to Al-Baṣra. But he rallied numerous friends around him, for with all his failings Yezīd was free and open-handed; so having attacked the palace, he slew the governor, seized the treasury, and by profuse largesses raised a threatening force. He had the support of the Yemeni faction, especially of his own tribe the Azd, who here as in Khorasan were allied to Rabī'a; whilst the Ḳeis and Temīm took the other side. His chief opponent, however, was the man of religion, the friend of 'Omar II., Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri. The Caliph, now alarmed, sent to offer a free pardon; but Yezīd had too deeply compromised himself, and must fight it out to the bitter end. The

Yezīd II. 101 A.H. 720 A.D.

Rebellion of Yezīd, son of Muhallab.

A.H. 101-105.

rebellion gained so great a head, that he was able to send governors to Al-Ahwáz, Fárs, and Kirmán, but not to his old province of Khorasán, for there the Azd were held in check by Temím. At Al-Basra all the adherents of Al-Hajjáj that fell into his hands were slain, but the chief men of the city, even such as favoured Yezíd, fearing to compromise themselves with the Court, made their escape to Al-Kúfa. Yezíd himself settled down inactive at Al-Basra, till tidings of an army 80,000 strong advancing from Syria under command of the veteran commander in Asia Minor and Armenia, Maslama, the Caliph's brother, forced him to take the field. His brothers urged him to leave Al-'Irák and occupy Khorasán, or the strongholds in the nearer mountains where the discontented would flock to him, and thus weary out the Syrian force; but he declined to be "like the bird that flies from hilltop to hilltop," and so moving forward he occupied Wásit. Maslama advanced on Al-Kúfa, where there was a strong party in favour of Yezíd; and having deposed the governor, with difficulty suppressed a rising. Then crossing the Euphrates, he took ground on the left bank of the river. Yezíd, leaving one of his brothers with a strong reserve at Wásit, marched against his enemy. Many Kúfaites of note, Temím as well as Kelb, came over to him. A week passed in skirmishing and single combats. Then Yezíd wished to attack the Caliph's army by night, but was prevented by two religious fanatics who followed him. Next day he harangued his army, denouncing the Umeiyads as a godless race, against whom it were a more sacred duty to war than against the Turks, and thus bring back the pure observances of their holy faith,—words that must have sounded strange from the lips of the unprincipled worldling. On the other side, to nerve his men by making retreat impossible, Maslama set fire to the bridge behind them. The rebel army, unable to sustain the Syrian onset, fell back, Temím showing them the way; and Yezíd, hearing that his favourite brother was killed, rushed upon the enemy's ranks, crying that life after that was no longer worth living, and was slain. On this, his remaining brothers, unable to hold their position at Wásit, retired, after beheading all the prisoners in their hands, some thirty including the stadtholder, and, with wives and children,

His defeat and death, ii. 102 A.H. Aug., 720 A.D.

took ship by the gulf to a fortress in Kirmān, hoping that its governor, who owed his post to Yezīd, would give his family and kindred shelter. But they were mistaken; the brothers were put to death, and the women and children, in defiance of all Islamic law, exposed for sale in Al-Baṣra; but a loyal servant of the Umeiyads, Al-Jarrāḥ ibn 'Abdallah al-Ḥakami, did his duty and ransomed them. Their estates were, of course, confiscated. Equally cruel was the fate of the prisoners at Al-Kufa, where 300 were by the Caliph's orders slain. In companies of twenty and thirty, they were brought out, some of them naked, and decapitated in cold blood. Thus the Caliph slaked his wrath against the faction hostile to Al-Ḥajjāj. And so perished the house of Al-Muhallab, none of whose descendants were meet representatives of that great man. The butcheries and contempt of human life we now so often read of, are a painful feature of the day. The cruel scene, however, is but a fit ending to the career of the man who drove the corn-mill of Jurjān with his victims' blood.

A.H. 101-105.

Slaughter of Muhallab's house and followers.

The services of Maslama in this dangerous rebellion, and in the campaign against the Greeks, were rewarded by the government of Al-'Irāḳ and Khorāsān. As his lieutenant at Merv, Maslama appointed his son-in-law Sa'īd, a weak man, called in derision *Khodhcina*, from affecting in his dress the attire of a Persian lady. The choice was far from fortunate. There was a general rising of the hordes in Khojanda and Ferghāna, which became dangerous owing to Muslim inactivity. The tributary Soghdians, threatened by these, sought protection from Merv, but help being slow of coming, they meanwhile made overtures to the Turks, and between the two suffered grievously. When Muslim forces did arrive, the Soghdians returned at first to their allegiance. Information, however, having reached the Muslim general of the murder of an Arab (for numbers of Arabians and Persians had begun to settle in the land), he sent for the culprit, and slew him in his tent. The Soghdians retaliated by putting to death the Muslim prisoners in their hands; on which the general fell upon the Soghdian residents, who having been meanwhile disarmed had only staves wherewith to defend themselves. The whole, 3000 in number, fell by the

Rising in Khorāsān, 102-104 A.H.

A.H. 101-102 sword[1]. Fighting went on more or less throughout the reign in these outlying provinces, but with no very marked results.

'Irāḳ, Asia Minor, and Armenia, 102-104 A.H.

Maslama not sending on the surplus revenues of his province to Damascus, the government was given to 'Omar ibn Hubeira, an ambitious scion of the Fezāra tribe, in reward for his military service. He had distinguished himself in the campaign against the Khawārij, and more recently on the northern border of Mesopotamia. He was a Keisite of the Keisites, and the Azd and Yemen suffered accordingly, especially in Khorasan. The legacy bequeathed by Al-Hajjāj began to bear interest. Yezīd II. followed in the footsteps of Suleimān, and outside of Syria the government represented only a party—that of Keis. The policy of extirpating the family of Al-Muhallab, a new departure in Islam, meant war upon the Yemen. In Asia Minor, the Muslim possessions were quiet. But towards the North-east several heavy, and not always fortunate, operations were carried on against the Khazar, Kipchak, and other hordes inhabiting the mountain region between 104 A.H. the Black and Caspian seas. The first army sent thither suffered a bad defeat, losing their camp, and being driven out of the country. A second force under Al-Jarrāh retrieved the disaster, and occupied Balanjar and other important cities; but incautiously pressing their advance too far, were overtaken by winter, and were surrounded and cut off by Turkoman hordes. The Caliph promised fresh support, but dying shortly after, left the task to his Successor.

Africa.

In Africa things went from bad to worse. The Caliph appointed one who had been a favourite secretary of

[1] Another tradition says 7000, which, even with any conventional margin, seems incredible. The Soghdian merchants were allowed to retire before the massacre. A romantic story is told of the fort of Bāhila, occupied by a clan of the Soghdians, who remained loyal. One of the Turkoman generals wished to marry a lady in the fort: on her refusal they besieged the place. A Muslim column came on the scene just as they were on the point of surrendering from thirst. The Turks were attacked and routed. They fled out of sight, and the Muslims meanwhile bore away every man, woman, and child to a place of safety. The Turks returning, found the fortress empty, not a soul to be seen, and declared that it was the genii who had done the miracle.

Al-Ḥajjāj as governor; and he, practising the harsh tactics he had learned of his master against the converted Berbers, roused an insurrection which, ending in his death, relaxed the bonds of discipline and attachment to the Court. A.H. 101-105.

Spain, as a dependency of Africa, was in an even less satisfactory relation to the Caliphate. Its authority being mediate and intermittent, the governing hand, strong elsewhere, was for this great conquest changeful and often weak; while the leaders, though valiant in the field, were in the civil branch intent chiefly on their own aggrandisement. The Pyrenees had already been crossed by the Amīr al-Ḥorr, perhaps under Suleimān, and in the year 100 A.H. the Muslim troops, attracted by the weakness of France, which was at the moment torn by internal discord, and by the hatred of the native race to their new masters from the north, made an inroad into its southern provinces. Ravaging the land as far as Nismes, they returned to Spain laden with booty. Tempted by this success, two or three years after, they again crossed the Pyrenees, stormed Narbonne, and garrisoned its fortress as their permanent headquarters. Under Samḥ ibn Malik, 'Omar's governor of Spain, they laid siege to Toulouse, but were forced to raise it on the approach of the enemy under Count Eudo, by whom they were put disastrously to flight. The scattered fragments rallied under the banner of the famous 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn 'Abdallah,[1] and found a safe retreat in Narbonne. But the reverse, bruited far and wide, emboldened the northern Spaniards, who had already in the Asturias thrown off the yoke, to fresh efforts against the Muslims, on whom about this time they inflicted a serious defeat. The mountainous region was a source of strength to them; and there the seeds of a new power were being sown, which in the fulness of time brought Muslim rule to an end in Spain.[2]

Spain.

Inroad into France, 100 A.H. 718 A.D.

Pyrenees crossed again, xi. 102 A.H. May, 721 A.D.

In a reign so weak and so unpopular, it is no wonder that intrigue on the part of the 'Alids, and now also amongst the descendants of Al-'Abbas (of whose designs mention is now for the first time made), gained ground

[1] Or, as he is called by European writers, Abderame.

[2] The Muslims lost Narbonne, and were finally driven out of France in 759 A.D. See M. Reinaud's *Invasions des Sarrazins*, Paris, 1856.

A.H. 101-105

throughout the East. A deputation from Al 'Irák, canvassing the cause in the harmless garb of merchants, was arrested in Khorasan and taken before "Khodheina." But he, listening to their feigned story, and accepting the guarantee of their friends, allowed them to go. And so the cause insidiously grew.

'Alid and 'Abbasid canvass.

Last of the Companions.

Year by year, tradition has up to this time been chronicling the death of aged men who having been in the society of Mohammad, are dignified as his *Companions*. Such notices, by the lapse of time, now come to a natural close. In 89 A.H. the last two of these who lived in Syria died, one aged a hundred, the other, a "Companion who had seen the two Kiblas"[1] Others survived in Al-'Irák for a year or two later. But the last of all who had seen and known the Prophet, died at Mecca in the year 101.[2] "Companions" always enjoyed special and high distinction in Muslim society. They would have done so under any circumstances, as having seen and conversed with Mohammad himself. But a fresh value as time went on began to attach to their words. The Kur'án, at first the sole guide in all concerns, social, legal, and spiritual, was gradually found inadequate for the novel wants of an ever-expanding Muslim world. The word and wont (*Sunna*) of the Prophet was now called in to supplement it. Collectors of tradition thus sprang up everywhere, who sought out "Companions" from the ends of the earth, and spent their lives in noting down their remembrance of incidents connected with the life of Mohammad. Nothing, however trivial, came amiss; for every word and every act might form a precedent hereafter in social or legal obligation. The profession thus came to be one of high repute, and hundreds of thousands of traditions have been handed down of every shade of credibility, upon which to a great

Collectors of traditions, or *Sunna*.

[1] That is, remembered when Mohammad prayed with his face towards Jerusalem as his Kibla, before he changed it towards Mecca. See *Life of Mohammad*, pp. 183-189.

[2] His name is 'Amir Abú-t-Tofeil. Others are mentioned as dying in this year who were born in Mohammad's lifetime; but they had not seen him. One of these died in 98 A.H. over a hundred years old. He had gone as a boy to Medina to make confession of his faith to Mohammad, but arrived just after his death, and so never saw him alive; another is mentioned as surviving till 109 A.H., who must have been over a hundred.

extent the law and custom of Islām has been built, and which incidentally also give us a clear and generally authentic view of the Prophet's life itself. A.H. 101-105.

Early in his reign Yezid was persuaded to nominate as successor his brother Hisham, and after him his own son Al-Welid, then but eleven years of age. Homage was done to both accordingly throughout the Empire. A few years later he repented that he had not given the succession immediately to his son; but did not venture on a change. Hisham nominated successor.

Yezid had even a greater passion for the *ḥarīm* than any of his predecessors, but it was more fixed and constant. We are told of a slave-girl Ḥabbaba and a songstress Sallama, whose influence was supreme at Court. Even Ibn Hubeira was said to have obtained his high place through them. His attachment to the former was so great that he did not many days survive her death. He had retired with her for a season to a garden retreat in Palestine, and there casting playfully a grape-stone into her mouth, it choked her, and she died upon the spot. For three days he clung weeping to her relics. At last he was persuaded to let her be buried. The funeral service was performed by his brother Maslama, who feared that if the Caliph were seen by the people, they would be scandalised at the extravagance of his grief. He never recovered composure or self-control, and died within a week. The cry of Sallama, who was tending his last moments, was the first intimation of the fact to his family and attendants.[1] Yezīd's passion for a slave-girl.

[1] The romantic tale of Ḥabbāba throws a strange light on the Royal *ḥarīm*, and the conditions of its domestic life. Some years before his accession, when on pilgrimage to Mecca, Yezid purchased her for 4000 pieces of gold; but his brother Suleimān, then Caliph, was displeased at the purchase; and so he returned her to the merchant, who then sold her to an Egyptian. When Yezid succeeded to the throne, his wife, a granddaughter of 'Othmān, said one day to him,—"Is there yet any one thing in the world, my love, left thee to desire?" "Yes," he answered, "and it is Ḥabbāba." "So she sent to Egypt and bought the object of his heart's desire. Then having adorned her as a bride, she seated her on a couch in an inner chamber behind a curtain, and called her husband; and as they talked, again she asked 'Is there aught yet in the world left for thee to long after?' 'Yea, and thou knowest it all thyself.' So she drew the curtain aside, and saying 'Yes, I know it; there sits Ḥabbāba waiting for thee,' she arose and left them together. And Yezid loved his wife all the more for it."

A.H. 101-105.

Death of Yezid II. 101 A.H. Jan. 724 A.D.

Yezid II died at the age of forty, having reigned a little over four years,—an inglorious reign, which failed to stay, if it did not actually hasten, the decadence of the Umeiyad house. Ibn at-Tiktaka calls him the Prodigal Son of the Umeiyads. He was succeeded by his brother Hisham, another son of 'Abd al-Melik.

CHAPTER LV

CALIPHATE OF HISHĀM. CONTINUED DECADENCE OF THE UMEIYAD DYNASTY

105-125 A.H. 724-743 A.D.

Hishām, 105 A.H. 724 A.D.

HISHĀM now entered peaceably on a long reign. His mother was of Makhzum, once the principal gens of Ḳoreish, and he showed favour to her brothers. Exemplary as a true believer, he banished, like 'Omar II., from his Court all things inconsistent with the profession of Islām, and his mild and generally upright administration might have restored prosperity to the Empire, had not the evil genius of his predecessors still cast its blight upon the throne. There was much besides to cause depression. His lieutenants were not always happily chosen, and they so played upon his two defects of character, avarice and suspicion, as sometimes to betray him into unguarded and cruel action, as well as cause him to miss the friendship and popularity which a well-timed liberality would have secured. Military enterprise was nowhere successful in his reign, and indeed repeatedly suffered severe disaster. From the first Hisham threw himself into the arms of the Yemeni party, and thus alienated from his rule the Northern faction.

Antagonism between the houses of Hāshim and Umeiya.

From early times, anterior even to the birth of Moḥammad, there existed a rivalry between the two chief stocks of Ḳoreish, the descendants namely of Hashim and of Umeiya.[1] The Prophet, sprung from the former, suffered bitter opposition, both in field and forum, from the Umeiyads, till the conquest of Mecca converted the whole body of Ḳoreish, and welded friend and foe equally within the bonds of Islam.

[1] See *Life of Moḥammad*, pp. cx ff. The accompanying table will

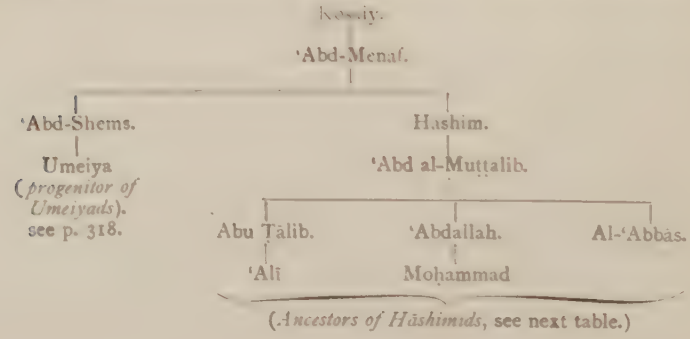
A.H. 105-125.

In the first enthusiasm of the faith, all distinctions of the kind vanished. But they gradually came to life again, and burst out fiercer than ever on the murder of 'Othmân, and in the struggle between Mu'awiya and 'Alî; while the Khawârij, who were continually rising in rebellion, recognised neither the one house nor the other, but demanded a purely theocratic rule. Things calmed down in the lengthened reign of Mu'awiya. But the tragic end of Al-Hosein and his family at Kerbala caused a strong reaction towards the house of 'Alî; and so there arose the party (called at first "the Party (Shi'a) of 'Alî," and then simply the Shi'a), advocating the divine right of succession in the line of 'Alî, and in it alone; a doctrine which began to be busily but secretly circulated by a widely scattered and disloyal body.

Claim of Mohammad descendant of 'Abbâs.

But now another and more dangerous aspirant came upon the scene. This was Mohammad, great-grandson of Al-'Abbâs, the Prophet's uncle. No pretensions had been heretofore advanced by this branch of the Hashim stock. The idea of their right to the sovereignty was of recent growth, and it was not till the present reign that it took definite shape in supersession of the house of 'Alî. The 'Abbâsid advocates, to conciliate the Shi'a interest, spread a report that Abu Hâshim, son of 'Alî's son Mohammad (the "Hanefi"), had on his deathbed bequeathed his right to Mohammad. Whether this be so or no, the plea of both parties was based in common on the immeasurable superiority claimed for the branch from which the Prophet sprang, over the Umeiyad. These latter were now incessantly maligned by 'Alîds and

explain the relation between the two branches, the Hashimite and the Umeiyad:—



(*Ancestors of Hâshimids*, see next table.)

Hashimids alike, as sprung from the enemies of Moḥammad, persecutors of his descendants, a wicked and dissolute race of tyrants, neglectful of the sanctions of Islam, given to wine and hounds, music, singing, and revelry, in short to every kind of profanity;—charges, indeed, for which that dynasty had too often given good ground. A.H. 105-125.

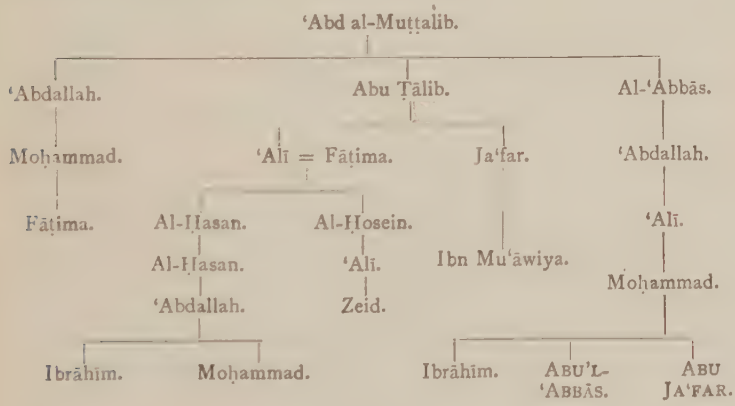
'Abbāsid canvass.

Deputations from Moḥammad, who lived in a retreat south of Palestine, frequently visited Khorāsān, in the garb of merchants. They plotted in secret, and though often discovered and put to a cruel death, persevered in their canvass and nursed the cause. Such emissaries burrowed busily in the purlieus of all the great towns throughout the East, and the 'Abbāsids began to gain in name and popularity throughout Al-'Irāḳ and Persia, as well as Khorāsān.[1]

Khālid governor of Kūfa, 105 A.H. March, 724 A.D.

One of Hishām's first acts was to supersede the Ḳeisi 'Omar ibn Hubeira in the government of Al-'Irāḳ, to which he nominated Khālid ibn 'Abdallah, a *protégé* of Al-Ḥajjāj, who was of Bajila, a neutral tribe though of Yemeni origin.

[1] The relation of the Shī'i, or 'Alid, family to that of the 'Abbāsids, as descended respectively from Al-'Abbās and Abu Ṭālib, uncles of the Prophet, will appear from this tree :—



Abu'l-'Abbās (Saffāḥ) and Abu Ja'far were the first two 'Abbāsid Caliphs. 'Alī, Moḥammad's father, having given offence to the Caliph Abd al-Melik by marrying a wife divorced by him, and being on that account ill-treated at court, had retired to Al-Ḥomeima, a village on the borders of Arabia, where the alleged transfer of the claims of Ibn al-Ḥanefiya is said to have taken place.

A.H. 105-125.

Ibn Hubeira met the too common fate in those days of fallen rulers, being cast into prison and tortured for arrears of revenue. He escaped, but was pursued and murdered. The Caliph caused the murderer to be put to death; but contented himself with an expression of displeasure towards Khalid, who had apparently instigated the deed. Khalid gave his brother Asad the command in Khorasan, and himself continued for fifteen years in the government of Al-'Irak. Towards the end of that period there were several Khariji outbreaks. One of these, led by a sorcerer, though followed by only a few disciples, is remarkable for certain strange doctrines, such as the divinity of 'Ali, held by them, as well as for their barbarous end. They were burnt to death at the stake with faggots steeped in naphtha. Another of a more serious character was raised by a man from Wasit, who declaimed against the use of wine, and denounced Khalid as "the son of a Christian (his mother being of that faith), who let mosques go to ruin, while he built churches and synagogues, gave office to Zoroastrians, and allowed Christians and Jews to take Muslim wives." The cause was popular. Great numbers rallied under his black standard, and fought with determined bravery. Twice they routed considerable columns sent against them, and it was only by an army drawn at once from Syria, Al-Kufa, and Mosul, that they were at last dispersed and their leader slain. Several other equally fanatical insurrections had to be put down by military force. The leader of one of these, after committing many outrages, was brought in wounded, with a body of followers. Khalid, astonished by his doctrine and knowledge of the Kor'an, sought to spare him: but the Caliph resented his repeated intercession; and so with his whole company the rebel was committed to the flames, all the while reciting passages from the Kor'an. He died with this verse on his lips: "Say, the fire of Gehenna is fiercer in its heat, if they but knew it."[1] Such was the wild fervour of these fanatics.

Khariji outbreaks in 'Irak, 118-119 A.H.

Fall of Khalid, 120 A.H. 737 A.D.

Apart from insurrections, which in themselves caused some anxiety, Khalid, after many years of faithful service, at last lost the favour of his Master, who either suspected embezzlement, or was jealous, perhaps not without cause,

[1] Sūra ix. 82.

of disloyal attachment to the house of Hāshim.[1] He therefore appointed Yūsuf ibn 'Omar, of Thakīf and related to Al-Hajjaj, governor of the Yemen, to succeed him. Without warning, as was often done, Yūsuf appeared at Al-Kufa, to Khalid's dismay, carrying with him the Caliph's command to realise with all due severity the last farthing of arrears, from "the son of the Nazarene" and his lieutenants. Yūsuf was nothing loth to execute his commission; for he sorely hated Khalid as the persecutor of his clansman, 'Omar ibn Hubeira. It was now the turn of the officers of Khalid to be cruelly treated, and on himself a demand was made altogether beyond his power to liquidate. He was tortured (meet reward for the cruel treatment of his predecessor) and cast into prison. After a year and a half, the Caliph ordered his release, and allowed him, against the reclamations of Yusuf, to join the army then fighting against the Greeks. But in the next reign, as we shall see, he was again pursued by the relentless hate of Yūsuf. A.H. 105-125.

The supersession of Khālid was highly unpopular, especially with the Yemeni clan in Al-'Irāk. His successor Yūsuf, a little man with a long beard, besides being of Modar blood, had already distinguished himself by a tyrannous administration in south Arabia. He is praised, indeed, for restoring the prestige of Islām, and humiliating the Jewish and Christian faiths. But though devout and given to long prayers, soft in speech, and a master in poetry, Yusuf was of a cruel and even savage nature.[2] In the course Yūsuf appointed to succeed him, v. 120 A.H. May, 738 A.D.

[1] He possibly was so in reality, though not openly. When accused of partiality towards the house of 'Ali, and of lending them money, he answered how could that be, when every day he cursed 'Alī in the public prayers; but that the people said was merely to curry favour.

[2] For example, he was capricious about his garments, and chastised the tailor if they were not fitting to his taste. He would draw his nail across the stuff, and if it stuck anywhere, have the weaver beaten, or even his hand cut off. His secretary one day, slack at work, complained of toothache as the cause; the barber removed the suffering tooth, and the next also as a punishment. One of the tales passes belief. Preparing for a journey, he asked one of his slave-girls whether she wished to follow; on her answering in the affirmative, he abused her as thinking of nothing but love, and had her beheaded; a second, preferring to stay with her child, shared the same fate. A third replied in terror that she knew not what to say, as either way she must give offence, and

A.H. 105-125.

Zeid, grandson of Hosein, aspires to Caliphate.

of his inquiries he discovered that Khálid had made over large sums of money to Zeid ibn 'Alí, a grandson of Al-Hosein, suspected of pretensions to the throne. The Caliph summoned him to his presence, and, dissatisfied with his attitude, sent him for further inquiry to Yúsuf. Zeid, however, managed to retire into privacy, and canvassed the Arab tribes in Al-'Iráḳ, living now with one and now with another, and ingratiating himself especially by frequent matrimonial alliances with maidens of the Yemeni line.[1] He soon accepted homage as the rightful Caliph from thousands in Al-Kufa and its vicinity, with the pledge to fight under his banner. This went on for months. At last his followers urged him, "now that the full time had come for the downfall of the Umeiyad house," no longer to delay. It is significant of the yet undefined relation of the two branches of the Háshimi stock,—the descendants of 'Alí and those of Al-'Abbás,—that Da'ud ibn 'Alí, one of the latter, sought to dissuade him from a step so premature. He bade him not to trust in his twenty, or even forty thousand;[2] "for think," he said, "how many of the 80,000 fickle Kúfans pledged to fight for Al-Hosein stood by him in the hour of need?" The advice was good, but unheeded. In one respect the theocratic zealots were dissatisfied with Zeid; for, like Az-Zubeir, he declined to say that Abu Bekr and 'Omar were usurpers of the Caliphate. Apart, however, from any such scruples, the light-hearted and pleasure-loving Kúfans were hardly prepared for a serious rising. They were ready

for presuming thus to argue, she too was beheaded. The currency of such tales, even if not actually founded on fact, shows what a tyrant they had to deal with, and also throws a lurid light on the habits and morals of the day.

[1] The names of two are given. A charming lady, but of mature years, came to do homage as an ardent Shí'ya; and Zeid, her age notwithstanding, asked her to be his bride. Excusing herself on the ground of her being no longer young, she suggested that her daughter, fairer and more elegant than she, would be more suitable. Zeid laughed, and was well pleased to accept the daughter in her stead.

[2] The numbers are variously given at from 15,000 to 40,000. These all took an oath "to set up the Book and the testimony and godly discipline, to follow the descendants of the Prophet, and to fight against their enemies both in secret and in public." Whereupon the covenanter placed his hand within Zeid's, and the obligation and homage were complete.

enough to covenant, but lacked the covenanting spirit. At last Zeid fixed the day. Secret information reached Yūsuf, who, from his palace in the vicinity of Al-Ḥira, gave command for the citizens to be gathered, both for safety and lest perchance they too might rise, into the court of the great Mosque. During the night the Shi'ite banner paraded the city, with the old battle-cry, *Ya Manṣūr!* In the early morning, Zeid issued forth, expecting to find a multitude ready to salute him. There were but 218. Nevertheless, he made his progress through the streets, driving the police and soldiery before him, from quarter to quarter, but with little other result. He was watched by Yūsuf and the chief men of Al-Kufa from afar. "Where are my men," he cried, "the 40,000 men that pledged their troth to me?" but none responded to the martial call. A follower answered, more sanguine than the rest, "They are shut up within the Mosque; let us march and set them free." Arrived there, they waved their banners high over the gates, and shouted, "Come from shame to glory; come forth for this world, and also for the next; of neither have ye yet any part or lot!" But the answer was only a shower of stones. Darkness coming on, Zeid retired to the great storehouse of the city, where with his little company he passed the night. Next morning he was attacked by a Syrian column, which he bravely met, and killing seventy drove them back from place to place. So passed the day: but as night set in, an arrow struck him on the temple. He was carried to the house of a follower, where, so soon as the arrow was withdrawn, he died. They buried him secretly; but Yūsuf discovering the place, sent the head to Hishām, and had the body, with those of the other leaders, crucified in the church. The head was stuck for a time on one of the gates of Damascus, and then sent to be similarly exhibited at Medina. The body remained exposed at Al-Kufa till Al-Welid II., on his accession, had it taken down and burned.

A.H. 105-125.

His rebellion at Kūfa, ii. 122 A.H. Jan., 740 A.D.

Defeated and slain.

This *émeute*, though apparently unimportant in itself, proved the turning-point in the destiny of the house of 'Ali. Although Yahya, the youthful son of Zeid, escaped, to the Caliph's great mortification, the 'Alid cause had, for the moment, hopelessly collapsed. Yahya perished fighting in the Caliphate of Al-Welid II. Up to this time, the

'Abbāsid way cleared thereby.

A.H. [illegible]-105

aspiration of the 'Abbasids, as descendants of the Prophet's uncle, had paled before that of the 'Alids, in whose veins ran the blood of the Prophet himself. The Hashimi interest in the impending canvass now centred in the 'Abbasids, and they were able to enter upon it with invigorated hope and redoubled effort. The Umiyads could have done their antagonists no better service than thus rid them of such dangerous rivals in the struggle for the throne. Al-Kufa was the centre of their propaganda, and at first all the leading conspirators were not Arabs, but Mawali of the shopkeeping class and tradesmen. Khorasan was worked from Al-Kufa. There the majority were stranger merchants of the Mawali, but the first leading representatives were Arabs. One of the chief of these was of the tribe of Khoza'a, which had settlements in Merv, and was related to the Azd and allied to the family of Mohammad. A communistic movement, that of the Khurramiya, resembling that of Mazdak of earlier days, ran parallel, and the 'Abbasids fished in all waters to gain their end. Money also played a large part.

Various campaigns in Khorasan.

Asad, brother of Khalid, 105-109 A.H.

Throughout the twenty years of this reign, the Muslim arms suffered many reverses beyond the Oxus, where things at the last remained pretty much as at the first. Asad had been early appointed by his brother Khalid as lieutenant there, but he was a tyrant, and having inflicted chastisement on certain leading men who had incurred his displeasure, was recalled. During this period, the Khakan with his hordes kept the country in chronic disquiet; and there was at least one serious defeat, the Muslim host being surrounded for many days, and with difficulty effecting its escape. An *émeute* also, causing some anxiety, broke out in the East between the Yemeni and Mudar tribes.

[1] It is true that there was extant another branch descended from 'Ali, the progeny namely of Al-Hasan, brother of Al-Hosein; but like Al-Hasan himself, who resigned the Caliphate into the hands of Mu'awiya, they had but little ambition. An amusing, but not very edifying account is preserved of a disputation held before Khalid (who is supposed to have had leanings towards the Shi'a) between Zeid as descendant of *Al-Hosein*, and the head of the house of *Al-Hasan*, who both, in gross Arab style, fell to abusing each other's mothers. But the descendants of Al-Hasan never seem as yet to have taken any practical step as aspirants to the throne.

which ended, not without bloodshed, in favour of the latter. Al-Ashras, the new governor, threw the entire country of Bokhāra and Soghd into rebellion by his breach of faith, in first promising remission of the capitation-tax for all who embraced Islām, and then reimposing it. The rebels were supported by the Khaḳan, and the Muslims suffered greatly at his hands.[1] In 111 A.H., to better matters, Al-Juneid al-Murri was brought over from Sind;[2] but though an able warrior, he was less fortunate even than his predecessor. On his way to join the army at Bokhāra, he narrowly escaped capture by the Khāḳān. In the following year, marching on Ṭukhāristān, he received an alarming message from Saurak, governor of Samarḳand, that the Khaḳan had surrounded the city, which, being from its great circuit beyond his power to defend, he must at all hazards, if not quickly relieved, go out and fight the enemy. Al-Juneid resolved on marching to his relief, but the forces under his command being scattered about in all directions, he had but an inadequate column with which, against the reclamation of his officers, he at once set out. When about half-way, he was surrounded by the hordes of the Khāḳān, and the battle raged with terrible slaughter. Prodigies of valour, as of old, held the enemy at bay. At last he retired to a defile, threw up entrenchments, and called a council of war. "Either thou must perish," they said, "or Saurak." So he sent messengers to Saurak ordering him to march out of Samarḳand, and so draw off the enemy. Saurak remonstrated against the mad attempt; but on Al-Juneid angrily threatening to supersede him by one who was his bitter enemy, he issued forth with 12,000 men. After a

A.H. 105-125.

Ashras, 109-111 A.H.

Juneid succeeds.

Samarḳand attacked by the Khāḳān, 112 A.H.

Juneid sacrifices Saurak and garrison of Samarḳand.

[1] For example, Kamarja, "one of the greatest cities in Khorāsān, and full of Muslims," was besieged by the Khāḳān for fifty-eight days with innumerable hordes drawn from Ferghana, Nasaf, and the country all around Bokhāra. A chief having been killed by an arrow from the battlements, the Turks slew the Muslim prisoners, 100 in number, and cast their heads over the wall into the citadel, on which the Muslims in revenge slew 200 hostages in their hands. At last, driven to extremities for water, the siege was raised and the Muslims allowed to retire.

[2] Al-Juneid owed his promotion (easy way of earning a command) to offering the wife of Hisham a rare and costly piece of Indian jewelry, which Hisham admired so much that Al-Juneid presented another like it to him.

A.H. 111-112. long march, when close to Al-Juneid, the Khāḳān turned upon him, and a fierce encounter ensued. The day was hot, and the Turks set fire to the dry jungle behind. Saurak resolved on a dash through the enemy's host, hoping thus to reach Al-Juneid's camp now close at hand. The Khāḳān giving way, drew him into the midst of the burning grass, hidden by the clouds of dust raised by his horse. There, part enveloped in the flames, and part slain by the sword, ten or eleven thousand perished. The remnant escaped to a supposed friendly chieftain, who betrayed them to the Khakān. They were, all but seventeen, cruelly massacred; and in the end, but three out of the 12,000 got safely away. While thus sacrificing Saurak, Al-Juneid seized the opportunity to emerge from his retreat; but, endangered by the flaming jungle he again retired, and then the Khāḳān came down upon him. In this strait, he proclaimed that if the Persian slaves of his camp would fight with him, they should have their liberty; and they did fight with such prodigious bravery, that Al-Juneid was able to force his way to Samarkand. He had not, however, been long there when tidings came that the Khakān now threatened Bokhara. So leaving a garrison behind, he fought his way back again, carrying with him the families of the annihilated force, who were sent safely on to Merv. The Caliph was deeply affected by the loss of Saurak and his army; and reinforced Al-Juneid with five-and-twenty thousand troops from Al-Irak,[1] who were sent on to Samarkand.

Juneid forces his way to Samarkand, ix. 112 A.H.

Transoxiana, 113-115 A.H.

Al-Juneid seems during the next two years to have been occupied in restoring order beyond the Oxus.[2] But he had no sooner done so than (such was the caprice of the rulers of the day) he was ignominiously deposed, for no other reason than that he had married a daughter of the rebel Yezid,

[1] The campaign of Al-Juneid is told with much fervour by the historians: prodigies were seen in the sky at the battle of the defile, a pavilion in the heavens, smell of musk on the field of the slain, etc. Al-Juneid, in reporting his defeat to Hishām, laid the blame on Saurak for not staying, as he had ordered him, by the stream which lay between them: but it would seem unjustly.

[2] Above all others Al-Juneid knew how to select his men, and his Generals are described as masters of war each in his own department. The Arabic equivalent for Transoxiana is Mā warā an-Nahr: lit., What is beyond the river, *i.e.* the Oxus.

son of Al-Muhallab; and 'Āṣim ibn 'Abdallah, a Ḳeisi like himself, but an enemy of his, was appointed in his place. Al-Juneid at the moment was dying of dropsy; but Hisham was so enraged at the alliance he had formed, that, aware of his condition, he bade 'Āṣim, if breath still remained, to put the dying man to torture. Death happily released Al-Juneid from the hands of the new governor, who vented his spleen, according to the wont of the day, on those who had held office under his unfortunate predecessor. As one result of this harsh treatment, a leader named Al-Ḥārith ibn Sureij, a Temimite, had raised the standard of revolt, with the old Khariji cry, "To the Book of God and to the tradition and the will of the people." He was in truth a Murjite who put politics before theology. He possessed himself of Balkh and all the surrounding country. Then followed by 60,000 Arabs, chiefly descended from the Azd, Bekr and Temim, he unwisely advanced on Merv, where, deserted by many of his followers, he suffered defeat and loss, and with the remnant was forced to recross the Oxus. Notwithstanding, several thousand Arabs still followed his banner, and the provinces in Central Asia, owing to the inaction of 'Āṣim, remained long in a state of open revolt.

A.H. 105-125.

Fall of Juneid, 116 A.H.

Rebellion of Ḥārith.

After a year of misgovernment and mishap, 'Āṣim was deposed, and Asad again appointed to Khorāsān.[1] His hand was soon felt in the reduction of the country, and the defeat of Al-Ḥārith and other rebellious leaders. The followers of Al-Ḥārith came to a grievous end. A party of his relatives and their dependents were by Asad's troops captured in a fort, and sold, noble-born Arabs with the rest, as slaves to the highest bidder in the bazaar of Balkh. In another fortress, 450 dying of thirst had to surrender at discretion. The chiefest of these, fifty in number, were beheaded. The rest were, by Asad's order, divided into three lots, of which one was slain, a second had hands and legs both cut off, while the third their hands only. Such was the barbarity of Asad. Al-Ḥārith himself effected his escape; and (a thing hitherto unheard of in Islam) joined himself to the pagan Turk.

Asad reappointed, 117 A.H. 735 A.D.

[1] The appointment of Viceroy was in the gift of his brother Khālid, governor of Al-'Irāḳ. Khorāsān was immediately under Al-'Irāḳ though sometimes administered direct from Damascus.

A.H. 105-125.

Balkh made capital of Central Asia, 118 A.H. 736 A.D.

Balkh, which must have suffered badly throughout the insurrection, was now rebuilt and beautified and made his headquarters by Asad.[1] The work was under the supervision of Barmek (father of the Barmecides[2]). An exchequer, with offices of civil and military administration, was established at this new Capital; and thus Central Asia settled down at last into comparative order. Asad now set on foot a campaign into Khottal, which the Khāqān hearing of, marched, with Al-Ḥārith in his train, upon Balkh. He had surprised Asad's advanced column, taking the camp with much spoil and all the women, when Asad came up just in time to save the force from being cut to pieces, and a parley ensued. The Khāqān, interpreted through one of Al-Ḥārith's followers, charged Asad with the lust of conquest in seeking to wrest from him Khottal, which had been his people's for generations past: "Rest satisfied," he said, "with what is beyond the river to the south, for that alone is yours." The conference ended without result, and Asad, not prepared for battle, retired to winter at Balkh, and the Khāqān to Ṭukhāristān.

Asad beats Khāqān and Hārith, 119 A.H.

In the following spring Asad went forth again with a strong army, completely routed the Khāqān, and rescued from captivity all the Muslim prisoners, male and female. The enemy fled to Ṭukhāristān, from whence the Khāqān, supported by Al-Ḥārith, was about to attack Samarḳand, when he was waylaid and killed by one of his chiefs with whom he had a quarrel. The joy at Damascus was unbounded. Hisham refused to believe the good tidings till confirmed by a second messenger; and then he prostrated himself in thanksgiving before the Lord.

Death of Asad.

In the following year Asad died, fortunately just before the fall of his brother Khalid, or he would have shared in the evils that befel him.[3] The old Naṣr ibn Seiyār, of the tribe of Kinana, and so identified with none of the great factions

[1] The troops had previously been cantoned at Al-Bārūḳān, two parasangs off.

[2] Barmek is said to be the title given to the chief priest of a fire-temple.—Browne, *Lit. Hist. of Persia*, i. 257.

[3] The immediate cause of his death was indulgence in pears, brought as a rare present from Herāt, the first apparently which the Muslims had seen.

in the country, who succeeded, was a wise and able ruler. He moved the capital back to Merv. Besides the four old capital towns, Nīsabūr, Merv, Merv ar-Rūd, and Herāt, there was a seat of government also at Balkh, Khwārizm, and Samarḳand. He carried his arms into Ferghāna. The task was now comparatively easy; for since the fall of the Khāḳan, the Turkoman hordes had broken up into parties, which offered no effective resistance. By the promulgation of a general amnesty, the Soghdians were brought back to their allegiance. Both Arabs and Mawāli were conciliated by assessing unbelievers alone for the poll-tax. The Jews' tax was collected by the Chief Rabbi, that of the Christians by the Bishop, and that of the Magians by the Marzubān. The Muslims, on the other hand, both Arabs and Mawāli, were made liable for the land-tax. Thus Naṣr introduced into Khorasān the distinction of *jizya* (poll-tax) and *kharāj* (land-tax), which were originally identical, and neither of which was paid by Muslims. And so, after having been for so many years harassed by rapine and war, the provinces in Central Asia at last enjoyed repose until the outbreak of civil war in Syria.

A.H. 105-125.

Naṣr pacifies Transoxiana, 120 A.H.

In Sind and Western India there is little to record of progress during the present reign. Al-Juneid, the governor, afterwards transferred to Merv, made some successful raids in the East; but he injured the Muslim name by warring against Jeishaba, an Indian prince, who, notwithstanding his profession of the faith, was made prisoner in a sea-fight and put to death.[1] His brother set out for Al-Kūfa to lodge complaint against this unjust attack, when he too was caught on the way in the tyrant's toils and put to death. The result of such treatment was that, under his successor, a general revolt arose against a rule hateful to the Indians; and so it became necessary to found in the tract bordering on the Indus, two strongly fortified garrisons, *Al-Mahfūẓa* and *Al-Manṣūra*.[2] By these the surrounding country was long held in check, and forward movement made into the rich provinces of the Deccan.

Sind and India, 107 A.H. 725 A.D.

Hisham revived the war against the Romans which had

[1] Ibn al-Athīr, under the year 107 *ad init.* The incident is not mentioned by Ṭabari.

[2] That is, the *Protected* and the *Victorious*.

A.H. [illegible]-125. Asia Minor.

been in abeyance since the accession of 'Omar II., the expeditions being generally under his sons Mu'āwiya and Sulaimān, but the hero of the campaigns was Al-Baṭṭāl ("the fighter"). Mu'āwiya was killed by a fall from his horse in 118 or 119 A.H. (736 or 737 A.D.). The Byzantine Empire being at this time weakened by opposition to the iconoclastic energy of Leo, the Muslims were, upon the whole, more successful here than elsewhere. But fortune was varied by severe reverses; and on one occasion a whole column of 10,000 men was cut to pieces. Al-Baṭṭāl took captive a Greek prince, who was sent to Jerusalem, and there, an unwonted sight, allowed to walk abroad.[1] After a famous career, in which Al-Baṭṭāl struck such terror throughout Asia Minor that mothers used to frighten their crying children by his name, he lost his life in a serious defeat in 122 A.H. (740 A.D.).

Baṭṭāl, a famous general, killed, 123 A.H.

Armenia and Caspian border.

In Armenia, the Muslims were hard pressed by the Alans and Khazar. The conquests already achieved were retained with difficulty and not without some terrible disasters. Peace had been restored, and the country to the shore of the Caspian made tributary, when war again broke out and Al-Jarrāḥ, the commander (who had been removed from Khorasān) was overtaken and with his whole army destroyed. A new levy was forthwith despatched, swelled by Kur'an-Readers on its way. The calamity was thus retrieved; after repeated engagements, the Khazar were driven back, and the family of Al-Jarrāḥ and other Muslim ladies recovered.

Jarrāḥ and his army slain, 112 A.H. 730 A.D.

Maslama.

Maslama, then sent by his brother to take the command, ravaged the country north as far as Derbend, when he too was surrounded by Turkomans, and in the ignominious flight lost his life. The Mesopotamian border was by this

[1] The sight, however, might not have been so unwonted, as pilgrims still flocked thither from the West, though few, no doubt, in pilgrim garb, and therefore not distinguishable in race or rank. The Greek prince is named Constantine, afterwards Emperor; but, as the Byzantine authors say nothing, it must surely have been some less notable person.

Of Al-Baṭṭāl marvellous stories are told. Falling sick on a journey, he was carried insensible into a convent, and tended by a nun. A neighbouring Patrician, angry at her attention to a Muslim, was set upon by Al-Baṭṭāl, who singly put his whole retinue to flight, slew the Patrician, cast his head into the convent, and carried the whole body of nuns to the army. He married the nun who had tended him, and she was known long after as "the mother of Al-Baṭṭāl's children."

defeat so seriously threatened, that Merwan,[1] who was with the discomfited army, hastened in person to inform his cousin Hishām of the disaster. A great army of 120,000 men was gathered from every quarter, with which Merwan, appointed to the command, beat back the enemy, and recovered the country as far as the Caspian Sea. The chief of the Khazar now submitted to the terms imposed by Merwān. These among other things included the tribute of 1000 head of cattle, 500 slaves, and 500 "black-haired" girls, the first of the fair Circassian maidens that were in the future so plentifully to grace the *harīms* of the East. In 118, and again in 122 A.H., Merwān carried the Muslim arms against the hordes to the south of the Caspian as far as Ṭabaristān, thus effecting a junction with Khorāsān. But beyond successful raids and siege of towns, with the slaughter of men and slavery of women falling into the conqueror's hands, little further is to tell.

A.H. 105-125.

Merwan's victories, 118-122 A.H.

More serious were the disasters in Africa and Spain, where the Muslim arms not only suffered frequent defeat, but, worse than all, the bond of subjection to Damascus became daily weaker. In the year 116 A.H. there was a general rising of the Berbers along the coast of Africa, caused partly by the reimposition of taxes on the Muslim converts, as though they had been heathen, and partly by the outbreak of new Khāriji factions.[2] The loyalist armies were again and again beaten with great loss, and victory in the end hardly won. A famous battle, known as "the Field of Idols," was fought a few miles from Kairawan, 117 A.H., against 300,000 Berbers; the issue, long doubtful, was at last gained by the Arabs, urged forward by the "Readers," and cries of the women from fear of the fate that might await them.[3] The western

Reverses in Africa, 116-124 A.H.

[1] Grandson of Merwān I., and nephew of 'Abd al-Melik; afterwards Merwān II., and last of the Umeiyads.

[2] A new branch arose, called, from its founder the Ṣofriya: *cf.* Shahrastani's *Book of Sects*, ed. Cureton, Part II., p. 102. These and the other sects that swarmed along the coast recognised the claim neither of the Hāshimids nor of any other branch to the Caliphate, but were pure Theocrats, or it may be Socialists.

[3] "180,000 were counted on the battlefield; there was no such battle since the days of Bedr as the battle of the Field of Idols." Another

A.H. 105-125. provinces of Africa continued all in uproar till 124 A.H., when the governor of Egypt was sent to stem the insurrection, and peace was at last restored. During this period the navy was not inactive. In the year 111 A.H., a descent was made on Sicily, and great spoil brought back; but three years after the fleet was wrecked, when the Admiral, for exposing it to the winter storms, was cast into prison and publicly beaten in the streets of Kairawân. In 117 A.H., Sardinia was ravaged; and in 122, Sicily was again invaded, and Syracuse laid under tribute. A project set on foot for reducing the island was dropped, owing to the troubled state of Africa.

Spain. Spain, as a dependency of Africa, was closely affected by the insurrection there, and by the constant change of governors. It was also distracted by the disloyalty of the Berber population, which streamed across the strait, vastly outnumbering the Arabs, who, as elsewhere, were divided among themselves by their chronic tribal enmity. Elements of trouble thus rife all round produced the natural result of disorder and revolt.

Campaign in France, 108 A.H. 726 A.D. 'Anbasa, appointed to the government of the Peninsula early in this reign, occupied himself at first in restoring order within its bounds. Afterwards he crossed the Pyrenees, with the view of restoring the shattered prestige of the Muslim arms in France. Carcassone was stormed; Nismes fell into his hands; the south of France was overrun; and the churches and convents were despoiled. Shortly after, he was killed; and the restless state of Spain prevented further action for the time. Some six years after, 'Abd ar-Rahmân appointed to command, renewed offensive operations, and chastised 'Othman ibn Abi Nes'a, a Berber chief, who had joined Count Eudo.[1] For the Berbers, as Muslims and fighting men, claimed equal treatment with the Arabs. In the following year he marched to the North with an enormous force, and overran the land as far as Poitiers. It was then that Charles Martel, in answer to the bitter cry of Eudo for help, hurried south to stem the sweeping Muslim wave.

'Abd ar-Rahmân, 113 A.H.

engagement was named "the battle of the Nobles, from the vast number of Arab chiefs slain in it." It would be unprofitable to follow these campaigns further in their wearisome and often fabulous detail.

[1] Abu-nes'a is changed by European writers to Munuza.

A.H. 105-125.

Overthrown by Charles Martel, ix. 114 A.H. Oct., 732 A.D.

Between Tours and Poitiers the armies met; the day was hotly contested, but at last the invaders were driven back and fled in confusion, leaving 'Abd ar-Raḥman dead upon the field. Next morning, the Conqueror, ready to renew the contest, found not a single soldier within sight; all had disappeared.[1] The fate of France, perhaps of Christendom, hung on the issue of that day. And in God's good providence Christendom was saved.

Further campaign in France, 116-119 A.H. 734-737 A.D.

Two years later, 'Oḳba son of Al-Ḥajjaj[2] returned to the charge, and effecting a junction with a body of Frank nobles hostile to Eudo, again invaded France. Arles, Avignon, and other places were surrendered into his hands, Valencia and Lyons besieged, Burgundy and Dauphiné ravaged all along the Rhone. But Charles Martel, freed now from the Saxon war, again came to the rescue, reconquered Avignon, and drove the Arabs back as far as Narbonne. Hostages were then taken from the disloyal chiefs of southern France, binding them not again to make common cause with the enemy. 'Oḳba died soon after, in the midst of Spanish anarchy. One general after another usurped command. Meantime the Berbers, stirred up by Khariji emissaries, had risen from Morocco to Tunis, and 'Oḳba had been compelled to cross over to the assistance of the Arabs. Syrian troops arrived in Morocco in 123 A.H. (741 A.D.), but were routed by the half-naked Berber horsemen at the river Nauam, with the loss of their leader, and two-thirds of their number. It was a more crushing defeat than that of Tours. The Arabs, also, were split up amongst themselves. Order was not restored till after the death of Hisham. Meanwhile the Christians in the mountainous regions of the North, profiting by misrule elsewhere, maintained their independence.[3]

Misrule in Spain.

Hisham's just reign.

Such was the long and chequered reign of Hisham; a reign, with all his demerits,—if we accept occasional outbreaks of cruel tyranny,—one of the most exemplary

[1] Ramaḍān 114 A.H., or Oct., 732 A.D. The victory is ascribed to the Franks finding their way to the enemy's camp, when the invaders, fearing the loss of their spoil, hurried back to save it.

[2] Latinised in the Spanish chronicles Aucupa.

[3] As regards the invasion of France, the Arabian authorities are very brief. I have borrowed largely from Weil and Reinaud.

A.H. 105-125.

of the Caliphate either before or after. It was not his fault that the Empire, already undermined, continued sinking. 'Abbasid emissaries on the one hand, and Khariji theocrats on the other, labouring in the dark left no stone unturned to overthrow the dynasty, casting the blackest and often undeserved obloquy upon it. His virtues failed to arrest the downward progress. The archives of state were during his reign kept with a scrupulous care unequalled in any other. There was no extravagance, and he left the imperial treasury full. Indeed, it was unwillingness to scatter largesses, and parsimony degenerating often into a mean and miserly habit, that injured his popularity and impaired his influence.[1] As an instance of his justice, he refused to let a Christian be punished for having chastised a Muslim servant, and chided his son for urging it. Scandalised at the dissolute character of his nephew Al-Walid, the heir-apparent, who even on the pilgrimage to Mecca indulged in wine and hounds,—abomination to the true believer,[2]—he had some thoughts of superseding him by his own son, till he found that he was little better. Al-Walid was not only intemperate in his life, but impatient of control, and insolent in his attitude towards his uncle; and so leaving the Court, he betook himself to a country retreat in Palestine. Hisham removed from him his evil advisers, and imprisoned his secretary, after inflicting stripes upon him. Al-Walid, resenting the indignity, addressed the Caliph a satire breathing hatred and contempt. He remained in his retreat during the rest of his uncle's reign.

Dissolute character of Walid, heir-apparent.

When Hisham was on pilgrimage, the year after his

[1] As a specimen of his meanness, a man is said once to have brought as an offering two rare and beautiful birds, expecting a present in return. "What shall I give thee?" said the Caliph. "Whatever thou pleasest," he replied. "Then take one of the birds for thine own." He chose the most beautiful. "So thou art leaving me the worse of the two," said the Caliph; "I will keep them both." And he ordered him the shabby gift of a few silver pieces.

[2] This was nine years before Hisham's death. The wild youth had even thought of pitching a pavilion hard by the Ka'ba wherein to have a carousal with his boon companions; but was dissuaded from the mad design. The tale is almost incredible, and may have been invented or coloured by 'Abbasid historians, always ready to blacken this dynasty. But no doubt he was bad enough.

accession, he refrained in the public services from the customary imprecation on the name of 'Alī. He was urged by one of 'Othmān's descendants to resume it; —"This is the Holy Place," he said, "and it becomes the Commander of the Faithful to rescue the memory of the murdered Caliph here." Hishām, displeased at his words, replied,—"I came not here to speak ill of any one, nor to curse; but to perform the rights of pilgrimage." On another occasion having unadvisedly reviled a Courtier, he was much distressed, and humbly made apology. Although thus in general disposition mild and upright, the reader will remember instances in which he was severe and cruel, not to say unjust, towards lieutenants who had fallen under his displeasure. A Muslim citizen of the old type, he was opposed to the rising school of the Ḳadariya, who advocated the doctrine of the freedom of the will, and indulged in philosophical speculations upon religious subjects. One such heretic he caused to be put to death for denying that the Ḳor'ān was uncreate. Another, who rejected the doctrine of inspiration, was by his command impaled after his limbs had first been cut asunder. There is the less doubt about such accounts, for though handed down by the unfriendly pen of 'Abbāsid writers, they would be regarded by most believers as not discreditable to the Umeiyad race, but rather as meritorious acts of faith.

A.H. 105-125.

Hishām refrained from reviling 'Alī.

Occasional acts of cruelty.

Damascus was much exposed to epidemic plague, and to avoid contagion the Caliphs with their families were in the habit of seeking the purer air of the desert. Such favourite retreat was Ar-Ruṣāfa, a city adorned with Roman buildings, four days south of Ar-Rakka. There Hishām spent much of his time; and there he died of quinsy in the twentieth year of his reign, aged fifty-six. To his Christian subjects he was not unfriendly. One of his friends was a Christian monk, Stephanus, for whom he obtained the Patriarchate of Antioch; another the Muslim traditionist Az-Zuhri. He disliked publicity, and transacted much of his business through his trusty Kelbite Al-Abrash. Yet he had all the business at his finger ends, and his ministry of finance was the admiration of the 'Abbāsid Manṣūr. His chief concern was to increase taxation to the utmost limit, and he spent the

Death of Hishām, iv. 125 A.H. Feb., 743 A.D.

A.H. 105–125. revenue in making canals, building castles, and laying out pleasure gardens. Like Khālid, he was interested in agriculture, but he was chiefly concerned about the price at which he could sell his corn. The result was that he was everywhere disliked; the Abbāsid propaganda spread rapidly during his Caliphate; and he left the realm in a worse state than that in which he found it.[1]

[1] Wellhausen, *Das arabische Reich*, p. 116 ff.

CHAPTER LVI

AL-WELĪD II., AND YEZĪD III.

125-126 A.H. 743-744 A.D.

THE two brief following reigns contributed nothing but disaster to the Umeiyad cause and to the Empire at large. 125 A.H. 743 A.D.

Tidings of his uncle's death were received by Al-Welid with indecent delight. Notorious profligacy and incapacity notwithstanding, he succeeded without opposition to the throne. He made haste to send and seize the property of the late Caliph's relatives and favourites, and to treat them with every indignity, especially those of the tribe of Makhzūm, to whom Hishām was related through his mother. Hishām's son Suleimān was beaten, shaven, exiled, and cast into prison: his officials were replaced by Ḳeisites. The well-filled treasury was quickly emptied by the new Caliph's largesses to his courtiers and increased pay to the soldiery. Such free hand, and a generous provision for the blind and infirm, gained for him a certain degree of popularity. But his intemperate and dissolute life caused great scandal throughout the nation. Besides such conventional profanities as wine, music, and hounds, his debauched habits alienated from him the regard of all the better classes. He was accused of tampering with the virtue of his predecessor's *ḥarīm*, and even darker vices were bruited abroad. To make matters worse, he appointed two sons of tender age his successors, and any who refused the oath of allegiance were imprisoned. The discontent rose to such a pitch, that even the Umeiyads plotted against him and encouraged Yezid, another grandson of 'Abd al-Melik, to seek his downfall.

Accession of Welīd II.

Dissolute and profane.

Khalid Al-Ḳasri, the former governor of Al-Kūfa, having

A.H. 125-126.

escaped the tyranny of Yūsuf, was now living at Damascus. Loyal to the throne, he refused to join the conspirators: and fearing that the Caliph might be waylaid on an intended pilgrimage to Mecca, dissuaded him from attempting the journey. The Caliph, angry because Khālid did not tell him more of the suspected intrigues abroad, and also declined to do homage to his sons, had him beaten and cast into prison; and he further revived against him the demand for arrears of revenue which Hishām had allowed to drop. Yūsuf, still bent on the ruin of Khālid, now saw his opportunity, and visiting Damascus with large gifts for the Court, "bought" his victim from Al-Welīd at the price of these arrears, amounting to fifty million of pieces. The unfortunate Khālid was then carried back to Al-Kūfa, where he expired under the barbarous treatment of Yūsuf, and was buried with indignity[1] (Nov. 743, i. 126 A.H.). Yahya the son of Zeid ibn 'Ali had been put to death somewhat earlier.

Khālid tortured to death by Yūsuf.

Yezīd, son of Welīd I., rebels against Welīd II., vi. 126 A.H. April, 744 A.D.

The treatment of Khālid kindled the indignation of the Yemeni stock from which he sprang. Kelb, amongst whom Khalid had made many friends in Damascus, were especially enraged; but 'Abs also, though of Keis, went against the Caliph. Verses taunting these with cowardice in suffering their kinsman to be thus trampled under foot, were freely circulated, and roused intense excitement against the Caliph. Al-Welīd had named his two sons by a slave-girl his successors; but his cousin Yezīd, son of Al-Welīd I., had by this time gained a large following. Al-'Abbās his brother, and also Merwān, commanding in Armenia, both endeavoured to dissuade him from his traitorous design, which they foresaw must hasten the downfall of their dynasty. But he persisted; and now supported by the Yemeni malcontents, who flocked around and saluted him as Caliph, he raised the standard of rebellion, and marched upon Damascus. The court and chief officers were mostly away in the country to avoid the pestilential air of the Capital, and so Yezīd easily possessed himself of the treasury. Then with its contents, having bribed the soldiery,

[1] See above, p. 387. According to some traditions, he had his legs broken, and the rack drawn over his chest, under which he died. His mother was a captive Greek who never embraced Islām. Khālid had built a church or convent for her, which made him unpopular with strict Believers.

he despatched a body of troops against Al-Welid. The wretched Caliph, enjoying for the moment a retreat in the south of Syria, with but a small following for his defence, took refuge in a neighbouring fortress. Al-'Abbās was on his way to support the Caliph, when he was taken by the rebels and forced to join his brother's standard. Al-Welid at first sought to parley with his enemies, who would not listen, but covered him with reproaches for his ungodly life. He then issued forth and fought bravely, but was forced by overpowering numbers back into the fort. There he took the Ḳor'ān into his hands and began to read its pages, saying—"It is this day, as it was in the day of 'Othman," and so was slain. His head was carried to Yezid, and by him paraded in the streets of Damascus. He had reigned but little more than a year.

A.H. 125-126.

Welīd II. slain.

Yezīd III. now ascended his ill-gotten throne. He began with many good resolutions. From the first he had serious difficulties to contend with. Owing his victory to the Yemenis especially Kelb, the Moḍar tribes were naturally his enemies, and moreover, the murdered Caliph came of their stock on the mother's side. No Ḳeisi was found about his person: his officials were of Kelb, to whom he owed his position. Though not profane, like his predecessor, he was obnoxious to the orthodox, because he denied the doctrine of predestination. The people at large, accustomed to the sacredness of the Caliph's person, were shocked at the murder and sufferings of Al-Welid; while the army murmured at the withdrawal of the increase lately granted, which the failing treasury rendered it impossible to continue, and called him the Naḳiṣ (Minisher). The inhabitants of Ḥimṣ, stirred by the wailing of the late Caliph's household domiciled there, plundered the house of Yezid's brother Al-'Abbās, and outraged the sanctity of his *ḥarīm*. Gaining over the troops, they then set out to attack Damascus under a great-grandson of Mu'awiya I., thus of the Sufyanid as opposed to the Merwanid branch of Umeiyads. Yezid on this despatched two strong columns under his brother Masrur, and Suleiman son of Hisham, who having escaped from confinement had joined the new Caliph. These met the insurgents a few miles from the Capital, and after a severe engagement, put them to flight; upon which the oath of allegiance to Yezid was taken both at Ḥimṣ and

Yezīd III., vi. 126 A.H. April, 744 A.D.

Fighting at the capital and in Palestine.

A.H. 125-126. Damascus. Soon after a still more serious rising took place in Palestine, which required an army of 20,000 to put down, as well as promise of office and largess to the rebel leaders. Such were the weakness and confusion into which the body politic now had fallen.

Troubles at Kufa. In Al-'Irâk things were not much better. Al-Kufa was glad to be rid of the tyrant Yûsuf, who fled for his life to Syria. Arrested there in women's disguise, he was cast with contumely into prison. His successor, Mansûr ibn Jumhur the Kelbi, was hated as a reckless, godless man, sharing the Caliph's heretical opinions. Yezîd was therefore obliged to remove him and send in his place 'Abdallah ibn 'Omar, son of the pious Caliph, saying that the Kufans would surely reverence him for his father's sake.

Khorâsân: 'Abbâsid canvass. While authority was thus relaxed at home, the outlying provinces had it much their own way. Khorasan especially was in a state of unrest, and strange apprehensions were abroad of coming change. Mohammad, the 'Abbâsid pretender, had died the year before, aged seventy-three[1], and now his son Ibrahim, who succeeded as "Imâm," sent a deputation, with tidings of his father's death, to his adherents, who formed a strong and increasing body at Merv. These kissed the testament in which Ibrahim was named successor, and forwarded to him large offerings, which they had gathered for his house. But as yet the canvass was concealed from public view.

Nasr holds on there. Nasr still held the viceroyalty there. Al-Walîd had confirmed him in his post, but, instigated by Yusuf, had summoned him to Court with orders to bring a rich assortment of gold and silver vessels, falcons, palfreys, games, and every kind of musical instrument, and with a following of maidens also. Nasr obeyed, but, foreseeing storms, journeyed slowly; and so, before he reached Al-'Irâk, getting tidings of Yezîd's rebellion, he returned to Merv. The new governor of Al-Kufa sought to supersede him by a creature of his own; but Nasr would not give way, and so succeeded in holding on. To lighten his treasury, a dangerous temptation for the rebels all around him, he distributed the vast store of precious things and slave-girls, gathered for Al-Walîd, among his own family and retainers, as well as in payment

[1] See table at p. 385. His father 'Alî died seven years before.

of the troops. The old feud of Moḍar and the Yemen was, however, continually breaking out afresh. The Yemenis were at this time headed by the chieftain of the Azd, called (from his birthplace) Al-Kirmāni, and riots and fighting prevailed between the two clans. Naṣr, who belonged to the Moḍari faction, was hard pressed by the other. Things were composed for a time; but Naṣr had dark days before him.

A.H. 125-126.

Naṣr in the East.

It was at this juncture that Al-Ḥārith, who, having gone over as a pervert to the Khāḳan, had been fighting under the Turkoman banner against his fellows, returned. At the instance of Naṣr, who, surrounded by enemies, feared his hostility and that of the Turks, he was pardoned by the Caliph and allowed, after having for twelve years fought on the enemy's side, to come back and resume his position among his brethren: a singular instance of condonation of an apostate's crime. We shall hear more of him hereafter.[1]

Ḥārith returns to his confreres.

Yezid was at last to be threatened by an enemy far more formidable than any that had hitherto appeared. This was Merwān, grandson (but illegitimate) of Merwān I., and conqueror of the Caucasus, the same who had vainly sought to dissuade him from his treason against Al-Welid. Merwān's son, on returning from the summer campaign in Asia Minor found Mesopotamia in confusion, took possession of Ḥarrān and wrote to his father urging him to hasten and avenge the blood of Al-Welid. Merwan, now between fifty and sixty years of age, set out for Armenia, and from Ḥarran despatched an army against Damascus. The Caliph in alarm meanwhile sent to offer terms;—he would continue Merwan as Viceroy of all the provinces which his father and he had held, including Mesopotamia, Armenia, Mosul, and Azerbijan. Merwan accepted the offer, and did allegiance to Yezīd.

Merwān attacks Yezīd III.

Compromise between them.

Towards the close of the year Yezid fell sick, and in anticipation of decease was persuaded by his heretic friends to appoint his brother Ibrahim, also an adherent of the

[1] I remember no other instance of a Muslim joining the ranks of a Pagan enemy. On returning, Al-Ḥarith expressed his penitence, saying that during these twelve years he never had a moment's peace till he was received back into the bosom of Islām.

A.H. 125
126.

Death of Yezīd III., xii 126 A.H. Sept., 744 A.D.

free-will doctrine, as successor. Shortly after he died at Damascus, aged forty-six, having reigned but six months. His mother was the granddaughter of Yezdejird, brought as a captive maid from Khorāsān.[1]

[1] Her great-grandmother was a daughter of the Kaiser, married to the Chosroes, and also descended from a daughter of one of the Khakans, so that she had thus the blood of all three potentates in her veins. Yezīd used, therefore, to sing :—

"I am the son of Chosroes; my father was Merwān:
The Kaiser was my ancestor, and so was the Khāḳān."

Cf. p. 352 *n.*

CHAPTER LVII

IBRAHĪM AND MERWĀN II., LAST OF THE UMEIYADS

126-130 A.H. 744-748 A.D.

Ibrāhīm's partial succession, 126 A.H. 744 A.D.

IBRAHIM can hardly be said to have succeeded his brother Yezid. He assumed indeed the government at Damascus, and held it for three or four months. He was addressed by some as Caliph, by others only as Amir. No general homage was done to him. It seems to have been felt that, unless in South Syria, he had no proper hold on the Caliphate, as events, in point of fact, did soon determine.

Merwān advances on Damascus.

For Merwan immediately on receiving tidings of Yezid's decease, started from his home in Ḥarrān, in the centre of the Ḳeis country, with a heavy force for Syria. At Kinnasrin, the Moḍari party joined his standard. Strengthened by their adherence, he advanced on Ḥimṣ, which, refusing to acknowledge Ibrāhīm, had been invested by his troops. Raising the siege, and with an army now of 80,000 men, he continued his march upon the Capital. A force had already started from thence to stay his approach. It was commanded by Suleiman son of Hisham, and composed chiefly of the Yemeni and other adherents of the late Caliph, numbered 120,000 men. Merwan's ranks, however, were full of veterans used to the field. They met in a valley between Baalbek and Damascus. Merwan astutely demanded of his enemy homage to two sons of Al-Welid, now in confinement at Damascus. They were in the enemy's hands, and he knew their fate was sealed in any case. Homage was refused, and the armies joined battle. They fought all day, but Merwan, used to warlike tactics, in the evening sent a column by a circuit, which, taking his enemy in the rear, put them to a disastrous flight; 17,000 were left on the

Defeats Ibrāhīm's army.

A.H. 126–130. field and as many more taken prisoners. Damascus thus left defenceless, Ibrâhîm and Sulaimân made their escape to Tadmor, the seat of the Beni Kelb, but not before they had plundered the treasury and put the two sons of Al-Walîd to death, also Yûsuf ibn 'Omar, the late tyrant of Al Kûfa. They had no sooner fled than the adherents of Al-Walîd rose upon the relatives of the fallen ruler with slaughter and riot, and having exhumed the body of Yezîd III., impaled it at the Jâbiya gate of the city. Merwân, on coming up, had the bodies of Al-Walîd's sons honourably buried, as also that of Yûsuf. And there being now none with a better claim, he was saluted Caliph, and thereafter returned to his palace at Harrân. His policy was one of conciliation and clemency. Thâbit ibn Nu'aim, who had mutinied against him in the Caucasus, was, with his consent, chosen Wâlî of Filastîn. Ibrâhîm, who survived only a year or two, was admitted to amnesty; and so also was Sulaimân, who to outward appearance was reconciled, and in token thereof gave his sister in marriage to the son of Merwân. His accession was a blow to Kelb and Kinâna, as his interests were those of Keis. He was also opposed to the Kadarîya, who held the doctrine of free will, whom his predecessor had fostered.

Is saluted Caliph as Merwân II., in. 127 A.H. Dec., 744 A.D.

Merwân surrounded by difficulties.

His success notwithstanding, embers of disaffection were ever bursting into flame around Merwân. The support accorded him by the Mudar (northern) clan, and the sanguinary defeat inflicted by them, rankled in the breast of the Yemeni (or southern) tribes. Khâriji adventurers sprang up in every quarter of the Empire; and the Hashimi (or 'Abbasid) conspiracy spread with alarming rapidity, especially in the East. Disaffection brooded over the Empire. Merwân, with all his strength and warlike prowess, was ever endeavouring to stem the rising wave. Even the men of Kelb, till now "the loyalest of the loyal," and the Syrian troops became disaffected. His reign was one continual struggle, which, spite of all his difficulties, would without doubt have put rebellion down, had the Syrian forces held a united and faithful front; but that, from the tribal jealousies prevailing, they failed to do, and the result was fatal to Umeiyad rule.

Harrân, Merwân's home, where his father had lived and

where he had grown up, now became the Capital instead of Damascus. This aroused the jealousy of the Syrians and united their opposing parties against the Caliph. First Ḥims rose in rebellion. As soon as Merwan approached, it submitted and surrendered to him 1000 riders of Kelb who had come from Tadmor to its relief. They were, it seems, spared. At the same time, the Kelb tribes who were settled in and about Damascus, attacked the city; but they were discomfited by a detachment from Ḥims, and their villages in the beautiful vale of the Barada burned to the ground. Shortly after, a serious insurrection breaking out in Palestine, threatened Tiberias; the rebel leader, Thabit ibn No'eim, was taken prisoner with three sons, and executed. Tadmor, the chief town of Kelb, also rose against the Caliph, but on the arrival of Merwān made peace. Merwan's two sons were now declared heirs-apparent, and, to conciliate the other branches of the Umeiyad family, married to daughters of Hisham. But he had not rested long when fresh troubles arose.

A.H. 126-130.

Various insurrections.

It is a sign of the restlessness of Muslim feeling at this time, that besides the claims of the representatives of Al-'Abbas, the uncle, and of 'Ali, the cousin and son-in-law, of Moḥammad, a pretender from another branch of which we hear nothing before, now appeared at Al-Kūfa, in the person of Ibn Mu'awiya, great-grandson of Ja'far, 'Ali's brother who was killed in the battle of Mūta.[1] This man was honoured on account of his birth by the governor Ibn 'Omar in Al-Ḥira, who even provided for his support. His pretensions to the throne were warmly espoused by the citizens, especially by the erstwhile supporters of Zeid ibn 'Ali. When, then, Ibn Mu'awiya stepped forth to claim his pretended right, crowds followed after him, so that the plain from Al-Kufa to Al-Ḥira was white with them. But immediately a force was sent against him, his brave supporters, after the fashion of the fickle city, fell away. The Zeidites alone did not yield until he was allowed, with his adherents, to depart across the Tigris to Al-Medain. There many flocked to his standard, including crowds of

Rebellion of Ibn Mu'āwiya, descendant of Ja'far, 126 A.H. 744 A.D.

Expelled from Kūfa, 127 A.H. 744 A.D.

[1] *Life of Moḥammad*, p. 395. Ja'far was the son of Abu Ṭālib; see table, *supra*, p. 385. He was killed two years before Moḥammad's death.

A.H. 126-130.

Persian slaves and Mawâli from Al-Kûfa. With their aid he gained possession of Holwân and the hill-country east of the Tigris. In the next two years, supported by the Khawârij, he played a marvellous rôle in Persia, establishing his court at Istakhr, and being acknowledged in Ispahân, Ar-Reiy, Kamis, and other chief cities in the East. In 129 A.H., however, the Khawârij having been subdued by Ibn Hubeira, his followers were dispersed by the Syrian columns, and he himself forced to fly to the far East.[1] By this time Abu Muslim (of whom we shall here more shortly) had established himself in the Hashimi ('Abbasid) interest at Merv; and Ibn Mu'awiya, learning that he was fighting for the house of Hashim, repaired to the governor of Herat and urged his claims as a scion of that descent. "Give us thy pedigree," said the Governor, "that we may know who thou art." "The son of Mu'awiya, who was the son of 'Abdallah, who was the son of Ja'far." But *Mu'âwiya*, as the reader will understand, was a name of evil omen to a Hâshimite; and so the answer ran, — "'Abdallah we know, and Ja'far we know; but as for *Mu'âwiya*, it is a name we know not of." "My grandfather," explained the fugitive, "was at the court of Mu'awiya when my father was born, and the Caliph bade him call the infant by his name, and for that received the gift of 100,000 dirhems." "An evil name, verily, for a small price," was the reply; "we recognise thee not." On the matter being reported to him, Abu Muslim bade them release the rest of the party; but Ibn Mu'awiya, as a descendant of Abu Tâlib, was too dangerous a competitor to be spared, and so by command of the 'Abbasid viceroy, the fugitive was smothered under a mattress, and buried at Herat, where, says the historian, his tomb has become a place of pilgrimage. Abu Muslim had cause to rue the cruel deed.

Success in Persia, 128 A.H. 746 A.D.

Defeated by Ibn Hubeira, 129 A.H. 747 A.D.

Put to death by Abu Muslim.

Rebellion of Suleimân, 127 A.H. 745 A.D.

No sooner had Ibn Mu'awiya quitted Al-Kûfa, than a serious rebellion broke out in Al-'Irak under a leader named Ad-Dahhak, one of the Khawârij, who now cease to be a merely religious body, seeking to save their souls, and join in the free fight for the Empire of the Muslim world. To

[1] His following must still have been great, as 40,000 are said to have been taken prisoners, but released by Ibn Hubeira.

[2] See table, p. 385.

suppress this, Merwān gathered a force at Ḳirḳīsiya to be led by Yezid ibn Hubeira.[1] But as it was assembling, 10,000 of the number, Yemenis from Syria, passing by Ar-Ruṣāfa, persuaded the bellicose but ungrateful Suleimān to put himself at their head. Crowds of disloyalists flocked to his banner at Kinnasrīn, and Merwān had to recall Ibn Hubeira from pursuit of Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥak to oppose the army, now swelled to 70,000, led by his new and formidable rival. After a heavy battle, Suleimān was completely defeated, losing his sons and 30,000 men; for Merwān would allow no quarter to be given nor prisoners taken. Suleimān fled to Ḥimṣ; and thence, leaving his brother Sa'īd there, to Al-Kūfa. Merwān was still held back from attacking the Khawārij by the rebellion of Ḥimṣ. Though surrounded by eighty catapults, which threw shot day and night over the walls, it held out for nearly five months, but at last capitulated. Its walls, as well as those of Baalbek, Damascus, Jerusalem, and other towns, were dismantled, a fact which shows how widespread the rebellion had been. But Merwān had taken the clay from the foundations to repair the walls.

A.H. 126-130.

Defeated; joins Ḍaḥḥāk.

Ḥimṣ besieged.

Meanwhile Al-'Irāḳ also was in a state of dangerous rebellion. It began in the north in the territory of Rabī'a, not among Ḳeis in the south. Rabī'a bore a grudge against Moḍar, who had dispossessed them of their territory, especially their leading clan Sheiban, round about Mosul, who were, since the time of Shabīb, the chief Khāriji tribe. On the death of Welīd II. they set up a Caliph of their own. On his death he was succeeded by Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥak, also of Sheibān and of the same family as Shabīb. After the expulsion of Ibn Mu'āwiya, the never-ending feud broke out with redoubled violence at Al-Kūfa,—Moḍar siding naturally with Merwān's governor, the Yemen with his ousted predecessor, the son of 'Omar, who took possession of Al-Ḥīra; and thus for four months a civil war was kept up between Al-Kūfa and its suburb. Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥak, who with a large body of the Khawārij, Ṣofriya, and other separatists, had taken advantage of the troubled times to ravage Mesopotamia, now hearing of this state of things, seized the opportunity

Rebellion of Ḍaḥḥāk, 127 A.H. 745 A.D.

[1] Yezīd was son of 'Omar ibn Hubeira, murdered by Khālid (p. 386); but like his father he is ordinarily called simply Ibn Hubeira.

A.H. 126-130.

for attacking Al-Kūfa: and, although both sides joined to resist him, they were beaten, and the invaders took possession of the city. Ibn 'Omar fled to Wāsit, but after three months he gave in and joined Ad-Dahḥāk, in whose ranks he found Suleimān also. Ad-Dahḥāk had now been above a year and a half master of the greater part of Al-'Irāk when he returned to his home in Mosul and drove out the government troops. Merwān, still at Hims, sent his son 'Abdallah with a column of Syrians to hold him in check; but he had no sooner, with this view, thrown himself into Nasibin than Ad-Dahḥāk besieged him there with an army of 100,000.

Beaten by Merwān II., end of 128 A.H. Sept., 746 A.D.,

Hims having surrendered, it was now high time for Merwān himself to take the field; and this he did with all the force at his disposal. The two armies met at Kefr-tutha, between Harran and Nasibin. The battle raged all day and well on into the night, when search being made on the field, the body of Ad-Dahḥāk, who with 6000 sworn followers dismounted to fight to the death, was found pierced through with twenty wounds. Next day, the battle renewed, the leader of the Khawārij, by a wild onset on the Imperial centre, placed Merwān in such peril, that he fled for several miles; but returning, he found the wings holding firm, and the enemy completely routed.[1] The leader of the charge, having penetrated to the camp, was there despatched by the cudgels of the servants. Having sent the rebel's head all round Mesopotamia, Merwān pursued the Khawārij, who, under a new Bekri leader, still held together 40,000 strong, to Mosul, drove them across the Tigris, and dispersed them in the East. Suleimān escaped, but only to meet his end at the hands of the coming dynasty.[2] The position upon the Tigris had become impossible owing to Al-'Irāk having

who retakes Mosul, 129 A.H. 747 A.D.

[1] We are told that after this engagement, the old Arab *battle in line* (*saff*) was given up, and fighting carried on by battalions (*kurādis*). This was one of the changes introduced by Merwān.

[2] We may here follow Suleimān to his end. He escaped with his family and retainers to Sind, and eventually presented himself, as an enemy of the Umeiyads, before the Hāshimi Caliph, who at the first received him graciously. One of his courtiers seeing this, recited verses warning the Caliph against appearances, and the danger of sparing any Umeiyad. Thereupon he retired, and shortly after gave orders for Suleimān, like the rest of his race, to be put to death.

A.H. 126-130.

Various Khāriji risings.

been seized by the Ḳeisi Ibn Hubeira. But though order was thus at last restored to the nearer parts of the Empire, the Khawārij had entire possession of Azerbijān, from which they drove out the Imperial troops. Throughout Arabia also they more or less prevailed; Abu Ḥamza their leader was so powerful that at one time he had possession of both the Holy Cities; and the Caliph was obliged to send a large force to restore order throughout Arabia. Though Abu Ḥamza appeared at the Pilgrimage with 700 followers against the Umeiyads, clad in black and with black banners, the emblem of the 'Abbāsids, yet as a Khāriji he was equally opposed to the Hāshimi pretender; for neither the Umeiyad, nor as yet for the 'Abbāsid race, did he profess any partiality or respect, but rather for the simple memory of Abu Bekr and 'Omar. It will thus appear that these Puritan covenanters, all over the Empire, if not in the ascendency, were yet powerful enough, even where baffled, to confuse and often paralyse the Government.

Khawārij.

In the West, as elsewhere, the administration was weak and unsettled. The governors throughout Africa had to keep up a continual contest against the Berbers and the Khawārij. In Spain, the Khāriji element was weak, and the Hāshimi unknown; but in all other respects Syria repeated itself in the Peninsula. The Arabs flocking thither in vast multitudes were taught to forget their native land, or rather to reproduce it in the West. Spain became to them a second home. Its landscape, to the Bedawi imagination, conjured up the lands of Syria and of Palestine, and the Bedawin seemed to nestle again in the scenes of their childhood. "Thus (we read) the Arabs spread themselves over the land; the men of Damascus settled in Albira (Elvira) because of its likeness to their native vale, and called it Damascus;" and so on with those who had come from Tadmor, Ḥimṣ, Ḳinnasrin, and other cities of the East.[1]

Africa.

Spain gradually slipping from Eastern control.

[1] Other places are mentioned, thus:—"The men of Ḥimṣ settled in Ishbīliya (Seville), and called it Ḥimṣ; of Ḳinnasrin, in Jaen, and called it Ḳinnasrīn; of the Jordan, in Reiya, and called it The Jordan; of Palestine, in Shadhuna, and called it Palestine; of Egypt, in Todmir, and, from its similitude, called it Egypt," and so on. See Al-Ya'ḳubi, *Descriptio Al-Magribi*, ed. De Goeje, p. 14 f.

A.H. 126-130. But with the similitude of the old country, arose also its wretched feuds. The Yemen fought against Modar and Modar against the Yemen. The contest was maintained even more fiercely than against the infidel, till at last they agreed to appoint a neutral chief chosen from Koreish. But even this failed, and for some months, there being no Amir, anarchy was rife. Then they settled to have an Amir one year from the Modar, and the next from the Yemen tribe. But at the end of the first term the Modari ruler refused to resign. And so things went on in the distracted land, till, as we shall see, Spain slipped entirely from the grasp of the eastern Caliphate.

Growing difficulties. At various periods, the Greeks, taking advantage of the civil war, made inroads upon the border lands of Asia Minor and Syria, which Merwan, with trouble on his hands at home, had no means of opposing. He had also, for the same reason, to turn a deaf ear to Nasr's cry for help from Khurasan, —where events, as will be shown in the next chapter, were rapidly hastening the downfall of the Umeiyad dynasty.

Merwān retires to Harrān, 130 A.H. 748 A.D. On the restoration of order in Mesopotamia and Al-'Irak, Merwan returned to Harran, his residence in the Desert, and there remained in dangerous and inopportune repose, till he was called away by the fatal campaign of the Zāb.

CHAPTER LVIII

THE ARAB TRIBAL FEUDS IN KHORĀSĀN

64-130 A.H. 684-747 A.D.

The rival tribes.

THE overthrow of the Umeiyad Dynasty was brought about by a rising of the Persian Shī'a in Khorāsān, which was itself colonised from Al-Baṣra. In Al-Kufa the people were split up, not into tribal divisions, but into political or religious parties. In Al-Baṣra tribal jealousy flourished almost as in pre-Islamic times, only the tribes acted, not singly, but in groups. The most important group consisted of Temīm allied to the Ribāb (sons of 'Abd-Menāt, with Ḍabba), under whose protection were many Persians and Indians. Opposed to Temim stood Rabī'a. The 'Abd el-Ḳeis went with Bekr in Al-Baṣra. The Yemeni tribes were represented by the Azd in Al-Baṣra, in Al-Kūfa by Madhhij, Hamdān, and Kinda. The Azd came late upon the scene, but took front rank through Al-Muhallab and his sons. They were taken up by Rabī'a, whilst Temīm joined with Ḳeis.

Power of the Azd.

Ziyād, Mu'awiya's stadtholder of Al-Baṣra, had found his chief supporters among the Azd, and ever after bore a kindly feeling towards them. On the death of Yezīd I., it was a Temimite who proclaimed Ibn az-Zubeir, and 'Obeidallah, Ziyad's son, now governor of Al-'Iraḳ, threw himself into the arms of the Azd, but thought it prudent to retire. In his absence tumult arose. Bekr now renewed their alliance with the Azd against Temim, and took possession of the Mosque, from which, however, they were quickly expelled by Temim, and the Azditė chief killed (x. 64 A.H., May, 684 A.D.).

Position in Baṣra.

The tribes resident in Al-Baṣra were now divided into two hostile armies, on the one side the Azd with Rabī'a (Bekr and 'Abd el-Ḳeis), on the other Temim with the

A.H. 64-130.

Rib'ab and Hanzala. Through the generous action of Temim no blood was shed, and the collective tribes chose an Amir, until Ibn az-Zubeir should send them a governor, which he did three months later. The feud passed, but the rivalry remained; and under Al-Muhallab Temim resented being made second to the Azd. A wholesome fear of the Khawārij also helped to keep things quiet.

Position in Khorāsān.

In Khorāsān the Arabs were opposed by Turks and Persians, but this did not prevent them from fighting amongst themselves. The country was too like their old home, and Temim especially kept up the old traditions.

Khorasān was conquered under 'Othmān by Arabs of Al-Basra, and it remained a colony of that city, whose governor generally regarded the governor of Khorasān as his lieutenant.[1] The western part of the country came to be occupied by Keis, the eastern by Bekr and Temim. The western capital was Nisabur, the eastern Merv. Sijistān to the south went along with it, and both were under Al-Basra. Ziyād and his sons ruled them for long. It was in Sijistan that the feud between Rabi'a (Bekr) and Modar (Temim) broke out afresh over the choice of an Amir. It spread to Khorasan where Al-Muhallab had been left in charge. His tribe, the Azd, were not strong in Khorāsān, however, and the other chiefs deprived him of one part of his province after another. Temim supported 'Abdallah ibn Khazim, who was not one of them, but of Suleim, another Modar tribe, and opposed to Bekr. Ibn Khazim drove Bekr out of Khorasan into Sijistan. This was in the year 684 A.D. (64-65 A.H.), and was simultaneous with the feud between Kelb and Keis in the west. Ibn Khazim tried to prevent Temim settling in Herat, so they waged a guerilla warfare upon him until he perished. But immediately the clans of Temim began to fight amongst themselves, until the Khorasān Arabs, foreseeing that these incessant feuds would end in their ruin, begged 'Abd al-Melik to send them a governor who would stand above party strife. He sent them a Koreishite of the house of Umeiya, "a jovial and generous man," but no soldier.

[1] Wellhausen remarks that along with the campaigns of the tribes as a whole, there went many anonymous expeditions of individual tribes. This reminds us of the conquest of Canaan as related in the book of Joshua and in that of Judges.

But it was not till the year 700 A.D. (81 A.H.) that the feud ceased, and even then Mūsa the son of Ibn Khāzim was still independent beyond the Oxus. A.H. 64-130.

Result of feuds.

The result of these intertribal wars was that not only was the territory beyond the Oxus lost, but the Turkish tribes began to raid Khorāsān as far as Nīsabūr. 'Abd al-Melik's Ḳoreishite stadtholder had resumed the offensive, but with such disastrous results that he abdicated (78 A.H. 697 A.D.). In his place Al-Ḥajjāj named Al-Muhallab, who had fought so bravely against the Khawārij. He did not effect anything; but he brought his tribe the Azd to Khorāsān. These joined themselves here as in Al-Baṣra to Rabī'a (Bekr), to the loss of Moḍar (Temīm and Ḳeis). Al-Muhallab was succeeded by his son Yezīd, who resented being under the Ḳeisite Al-Ḥajjāj, and befriended the Yemeni fugitives from Al-Ash'ath's rebellion. His half-brother Al-Mufaḍḍal was then put in his place, since Al-Ḥajjāj dared not appoint a Ḳeisite as long as the Ḳeisite Musa remained independent beyond the Oxus; since corbies do not peck out corbies' e'en, Al-Mufaḍḍal foolishly "sawed off the branch on which he sat." As soon as Mūsa was put out of the way he and his brothers lost their posts, and the Azd and Bekr their supremacy. His successor Ḳoteiba, being of a neutral and insignificant tribe, was entirely dependent on the government, and so sided with Ḳeis. The Azd hated him for his treatment of the sons of Al-Muhallab. When Ḳoteiba's turn came, they with Rabī'a plotted his overthrow in secret, for, had they done so openly, Temīm would have taken his part. These, however, he had estranged by his conduct to their leaders, and their chief headed the mutiny. The Persian Mawāli, who formed a corps by themselves in the Muslim army, were devoted to him, but they could be brought round. It was an Azdite who despatched him.

Under the later Umeiyads.

The fate of Ḳoteiba, like that of 'Obeidallah, shows that with the Arabs the man apart from the tribe is nothing. The Persians took the opposite view, and in this case they were right; for the fall of Ḳoteiba meant the fall of the Arab dominion in the lands which he had won for them. With the arrival of Yezīd, son of Al-Muhallab, in Khorāsān in the year 98 A.H., the Azd recovered the hegemony there; but with his deposition by 'Omar II., a condition of

A.H. 64-130.

equilibrium supervened. Then with the fall of the Muhallabis under Yezid II., all Azdi officials were dismissed and their chiefs reviled. Bahila, Koteiba's clan, had their revenge. Modar, with Temim at their head, returned to power. The stadtholders were, however, generally of Keis. Even these had feuds amongst themselves, chiefly over money matters. In the spring of the year 105 A.H. (724 A.D.), the governor sent an expedition against Ferghâna; but the Azd and Rabi'a mutinied under Koteiba's brother 'Amr. Hishâm removed the Keisite governor of Al-'Irak, Ibn Hubeira, to make way for Khalid ibn 'Abdallah of Bajila, a tribe closely related to the Azd; and Asad, a young brother of the latter, became governor of Khorasân. Bajila was, however, a neutral tribe. Asad was superseded in 109 A.H. by a Keisite. The unjust treatment of the Soghdians had effects outside of that country. Al-Harith ibn Sureij took up the rights of the Persian Mawali to exemption from taxation and a share in the pensions, as Abu's-Saida had done before him, and many of the Azd and Temim gathered to his black standard. When Asad returned to Khorasân in 177 A.H. (735 A.D.) he freed the imprisoned officials of Al-Juneid, though Keisites opposed to himself, and adopted a neutral policy. The fall of Khalid hastened that of the Umeiyad dynasty. His successor Yusuf was an out-and-out Keisite of the family of Al-Hajjaj, and he would have named a lieutenant like himself for Khorasân, had not the Caliph Hishâm nominated the Kinânite Nasr—one of the few old men who play a part in these fierce times. Like Koteiba he had no powerful tribe at his back, and so was dependent on the Caliph. His officials were, however, mostly of Temim, to which tribe Kinâna is related.

Al-Walid II. ruled in the Keis interest. Nasr did not recognise his murderer and successor Yezid III., but asked to be recognised as Amir of Khorasân until the civil war should end. To that even the Azd and Rabi'a agreed. Yet Nasr continued to hold the balance even between both parties. But Yezid III. had been placed on the throne by the Yemen, and the Azd and Rabi'a were not long in finding an excuse for mutiny. Under Al-Kirmâni they raised the cry of vengeance upon the Umeiyads for their treatment of the family of Al-Muhallab. Nasr now unwisely invited Al-Harith ibn Sureij from his exile among the Turks, and he,

arriving in Merv in July, 745 A.D. (ix. 127 A.H.), was joined by some thousands of his own tribe of Temim. Naṣr was obliged to retire to Nīsābūr, the chief town of Ḳeis, and left Merv to Al-Ḥārith and Al-Kirmāni. Quarrels, however, broke out, and the Azd vanquished Temīm in April, 746 A.D. (vii. 128 A.H.). Al-Ḥārith was slain. He was the forerunner of Abu Muslim, and did more than anyone else to overthrow the sway of the Umeiyads and the Arabs. In the following year Naṣr, now eighty years of age, set out with all his forces to recover Merv from Al-Kirmāni; but Abu Muslim and the Shi'i supporters of the 'Abbāsid cause, mostly Persians, were encamped not far from the town. Dread of a common enemy drew the Arabs together for once. The Azd and Temim, the Yemen and Moḍar were at last at one, and Naṣr entered Merv at the end of the year 129 A.H. (August, 747 A.D.). Abu Muslim was in a critical position, but he succeeded in bringing over the Azd to his side, and entered Merv in December, 747 A.D. (iv. 130 A.H.). Naṣr fled to Nisabūr. The Umeiyad cause was lost in Khorāsān. A.H. 64-130.

CHAPTER LIX

REMAINDER OF MERWĀN'S REIGN. 'ABBĀSID RISING IN THE EAST UNDER ABU MUSLIM AND KAḤṬABA. RECOGNITION OF 'ABBĀSID CALIPH. BATTLE OF THE ZĀB. DEFEAT AND DEATH OF MERWĀN

130-132 A.H. 748-750 A.D.

Growth of 'Abbāsid influence in the East.

THE progress of recent events in the East has been kept for separate treatment. The same causes were there at work as elsewhere,—Khāriji risings and tribal jealousies. But there were special elements of weakness besides. The authority of the Court was felt less in Khorāsān than elsewhere, and, in fact, was fast disappearing altogether. Hāshimi treason, long secretly hatching its disloyal brood, was now coming to an open head: and powerful clubs in support of the 'Abbāsid rising were appearing fearlessly everywhere. The body politic was falling to pieces; and the specious claim of the Prophet's house as against the ungodly Umeiyads, paved an easy way for the great change now looming in the future.

Critical position of Umeiyads in Khorāsān, 126-128 A.H. 743-745 A.D.

The position of Nasr, Viceroy in Khorāsān, had become in the last degree critical. Al-Kirmāni, as already stated, had drawn to his standard the Yemeni faction,—that, namely, hostile to Nasr. Put in prison as a dangerous agitator, he effected his escape, and kept up an armed opposition. To increase the disorder, Al-Ḥārith, for whom Nasr had obtained amnesty from the Court, turned against him; and, confederate as he had been of the pagan Turk, assumed now a high religious profession, and raising the black flag, demanded a reform of government in accordance with 'the Book of the Lord.' After many fruitless negotiations, Nasr offered to help him if he would again

depart and fight beyond the Oxus, but he preferred to remain and do battle, now on the side of Al-Kirmāni, and now against him. In one of these engagements he was killed: Al-Kirmani maintained his ground against Naṣr, who had retired to Nīsābūr. It was still the endless quarrel of Moḍar and the Yemen pitted one against the other, with no decisive result other than that Khorāsān was left with hardly even the form of government.

A.H. 130-132. Events in Khorāsān.

The Arabs of Khorāsān were almost more Persian than Arab. Their fathers had married Persian wives, and the sons spoke Persian rather than Arabic, drank wine, wore trousers, and kept the Persian holidays. The Persians, on the other hand, were probably better off after the Arab conquest than before. Heathenism was tolerated, and when they did go over to Islām, it was from social, not religious motives. They then joined an Arab tribe and assumed Arabic names, and in time became more sincere believers than the Arabs themselves. The latter always regarded them, however, with suspicion. In the army, which offered the readiest gate to Islam, the Mawali fought on foot, the Arabs on horseback. They shared in the spoil, but were not on the pension-list, and still paid the subject-tax. It was Islam itself which taught them their equality with their masters. This was acknowledged by the Khawārij, the Murjiya, but most of all by the Shi'a. The Shi'a was of two kinds, the merely political, which wished to keep the succession in the line of Moḥammad, and the theosophic, which found incarnations of the Divine in Ibn al-Ḥanefiya, his son Abu Hāshim, and others.

Abu Muslim, agent of the 'Abbāsids,

Just then, towards the end of 129 A.H., the great black standard of the 'Abbasids was unfurled in Khorasan by Abu Muslim.[1] The origin of this famous man who, though still young, was already the hero of the new dynasty, is obscure. He certainly was no Arab. Amidst much that is discordant, we may assume that he was born a slave. In the year 125 A.H. (743 A.D.) Moḥammad, head of the 'Abbasid house, with a party of his adherents, visited Mecca;

[1] Black may have been chosen because that was the colour of Moḥammad's banner, or because it was that of Al-Ḥārith ibn Sureij, and so liked by the Mawāli, or because it is the colour of Vengeance. Umeiyads and 'Alids in contrast had white; the Khawārij red.

A.H. 130-132.

and anticipating decease (he died the same year) bade his followers in that event to take his son Ibrâhîm as successor. At the same time he purchased Abu Muslim, then not twenty years of age, as a likely agent for the service of the House. Abu Muslim fulfilling thus the office of confidential agent, was kept going to and fro between Khorasan and Al-Homeima (the village in south Palestine where the family lived) to promote the cause, and to report its progress. At last, in 129 A.H., he gave so promising an account of the zeal of his adherents, of the impotence of Umeiyad rule in Khorasan, and of the distractions there, that he received from Ibrâhîm command to delay no longer, but raise at once the banner of the new Dynasty. In the month of Ramaḍân accordingly, Abu Muslim proceeding to the far East, sent forth his emissaries in all directions with instructions when and how the rising was to take place. Before the month was over, contingents had begun to pour in from every quarter. In one night there arrived no fewer than sixty from as many different places. The first religious service took place on Friday, 1 x. 129 A.H. (June 15, 747 A.D.), at the breaking of the great fast. The Imâm was Suleimân ibn Kethîr of Khoza'a, who was still nominal head of the movement. The Umeiyad garrisons were expelled from Herat and other cities in the far East. Elsewhere, Abu Muslim's agents sought to win over the Moḍar by abuse of the Yemeni tribes; and the Yemen by abuse of the Moḍar. He came in person to Merv and succeeded in detaching the Azd from the Arab alliance, but in such a way as not to offend Moḍar. Even Nasr and Al-Kirmâni were tampered with; but the latter was assassinated by a son of Al-Ḥârith ibn Sureij. Then Abu Muslim, persuading them that Nasr had instigated the murder, was joined by the son of that chief[1] with the Azd who followed him, drove Nasr out of Merv, and took possession of the Citadel. But this success at last united the Syrians of either party against the Hashimi rebellion; and if the Caliph had only

raises black standard in the East, ix. 129 A.H. May, 747 A.D.

Takes Merv.

[1] The two sons of Al Kirmâni were, however, found by Abu Muslim, probably from their Syrian associations, to be inconvenient allies, and were, with their attendants, treacherously put to death. Abu Muslim made no scruple of assassinating by any underhand means those whom he found in his way.

A.H. 130-132.

Naṣr appeals for help.

been able to strengthen Naṣr's hands, the event must have been very different. The unfortunate Viceroy appealed to his Caliph in bitter terms that he was left without support; and quoting verses to the effect that beneath was a volcano ready at any moment to burst forth, he added the fateful words—*Is the house of Umeiya awake, or is it slumbering still?* On receiving this despairing cry, Merwān ordered Ibn Hubeira to hasten reinforcements to the East; but with disaffection around him in the West, it was little that the General could do for Naṣr. About the same time, the Caliph intercepted a letter from his 'Abbāsid rival, Ibrāhīm son of Moḥammad, to Abu Muslim, upbraiding him for not making more rapid progress in Khorasan, and warning him against the hostility of the Arabs and Syrians towards the rising cause. Startled and alarmed at his machinations, Merwān bade the governor of the Belḳa arrest Ibrāhīm. He was accordingly seized in his house at Al-Ḥomeima, and sent to Ḥarran, where shortly after he died, but whether by a violent death, or a natural one, is uncertain.[1] On the arrest of Ibrāhīm, his brothers Abu'l-'Abbās and Abu Ja'far, with the rest of the family, fled to Al-Kūfa, where they remained for the present in concealment.

Arrest and death of Ibrahīm.

Abu Muslim's able administration.

Meanwhile Abu Muslim was making steady progress in the East. His open unassuming habits, with neither body-guard nor courtly ceremony, attached men to him. He committed the ordinary administration to a Council of twelve, chosen from the earliest adherents of the new cause. He was also wise enough to make his watch-word simply the *House of Hāshim*, the common ancestor of 'Alids and 'Abbāsids,[2] without declaring by name the master or even the family for whom he fought. There were still many who held by the line of Abu Ṭālib, and wished to see one of his descendants, rather than an 'Abbāsid, succeed; the cry, therefore, of Abu Muslim embraced all these branches, including that of 'Ali. At one time Abu Muslim opened friendly communications with Naṣr, who, seeing no hope of help from

Abu Muslim in the East.

[1] Some say he died of the plague; others that he was poisoned in a draught of milk; others that Merwān caused his prison house to fall upon him. The presumption is against a violent death. Abu'l-'Abbās succeeded him.

[2] The Hāshimiya now means the extreme Shī'a, so named from Abu Hāshim the son of Ibn al-Hanefiya.

A.H. 130-132.

Naṣr flees south; is defeated by Kaḥṭaba, end of 130 A.H.

Syria, had thoughts to throw in his lot with him; but fearing treachery, he at last resolved on flight, and so, with the troops still faithful to the Umeiyad cause, hastened south to Sarakhs, and thence to Nîsâbûr. There, pursued by Kaḥṭaba of the tribe of Ṭaʾi, Abu Muslim's famous general, he suffered a defeat in which he lost his son. Thence he, accompanied by the Arab fugitives from Khorasân belonging to Temim, Bekr, and Keis, fled to Jurjân, where was a strong force of friendly Syrians. But fortune had deserted the Caliph's cause, and Kaḥṭaba again achieved a signal victory, slaying thousands of his enemy. Naṣr, again appealing bitterly, but in vain, for help, continued his flight westward to Ar-Reiy. There he fell sick, and was carried on towards Hamadân, but died upon the way. He was eighty-five years old, and his long and distinguished services as viceroy of Khorasân deserved a better fate. He was the one loyal man of the time.

Death of Naṣr, iii. 131 A.H. Nov., 748 A.D.

Kaḥṭaba advances on Kûfa, 131 A.H. 749 A.D.

Kaḥṭaba now advanced rapidly westward. His chief lieutenants were Abu ʿAun of the Azd, Khâzim of Temim, and the Persian Khalid ibn Barmek. Entering Reiy he restored order there, while his son, Ibn Kaḥṭaba, with other generals reduced the country all around,—the followers of the Umeiyads, as well as the Khawârij whose rebellion had recently been quelled, flying terrified before them. Ibn Kaḥṭaba laid siege to Nihâvend. The Caliph's army from Kirmân (now released by Ibn Muʾawiya's defeat and flight) advancing, 100,000 strong, to its relief, was intercepted by Kaḥṭaba, who with 20,000 men, after a fierce battle, entirely routed his enemy, and took his camp, itself a little city filled with all the luxuries of the East. After a three months' siege, Nihâvend fell, and then Kaḥṭaba, having fetched a northern circuit across the Euphrates to avoid Ibn Hubeira, the Syrian general at Jalûla, made direct for Al-Kûfa where, with expectations raised by the tidings of recent success, the Hashimi citizens were looking impatiently for his appearance. It was the beginning of the year 132 A.H. when Kaḥṭaba crossed the Euphrates, some thirty or forty miles above Al-Kûfa; but Ibn Hubeira was before him, and the two armies met somewhere in the vicinity of Kerbala. In this encounter the Syrians were worsted, but the Hashimis too suffered, for Kaḥṭaba fell upon the field. His son, Al-Ḥasan

Defeats Ibn Hubeira, who falls back on Wâsiṭ, 8 i. 132 A.H. Aug. 27, 749 A.D.

ibn Ḳaḥṭaba, then took command, and, following up his father's success, forced Ibn Hubeira, abandoning his camp and all its stores, to retire on Wāsiṭ. Al-Kufa thus uncovered, the Hashimi force advanced, and after slight opposition,—for the Syrian troops deserted hastily the Umeiyad leader,—took possession of the city; and shortly after Abu'l 'Abbās with his family and relatives emerged from their hiding there. In anticipation of the new order of things (reserved for another chapter), Abu Salama, who had been one of the busy agents of the Hashimis in Khorāsān, was recognised provisionally as "Wazir of the house of Moḥammad," and Moḥammad, son of Khālid (former governor of Al-Kūfa), as "Amir."[1] In general the Yemen (with Rabi'a) supported the revolution, Moḍar the Arab supremacy, and in Al-Baṣra Moḍar for the moment succeeded.

A.H. 130-132. Takes Kūfa; Abu'l-'Abbās emerges from hiding, 14 i. 132 A.H. Sept. 2, 749 A.D.

Meanwhile, stirring events were passing in Upper Mesopotamia. Ḳaḥṭaba, in his victorious progress westward, had detached an able general, Abu 'Aun, from Nihavend to press forwards to Mesopotamia. Reaching Shahrazor, east of the Little Zāb, towards the end of 131 A.H., he there defeated with great slaughter the troops of 'Abdallah, Merwan's son, and occupied the region east of Mosul. The Caliph himself, since his campaign against the Khawarij, had remained inactive at Ḥarran. He was now roused, by seeing the enemy at his very door, to take the field in person,—which earlier done, the issue might have been very different; but now with rebellion, defeat, and disaffection around, the ground was sinking under foot. Crossing the Tigris, he advanced upon the Greater Zab with an army of 120,000, sufficiently strong in numbers to meet his enemy, but made up in great measure of lukewarm Yemeni tribes and Khawarij. Meanwhile, Ibn Hubeira having retired on Wasit, Abu'l-'Abbas the rival Caliph—allegiance had been sworn to him in Al-Kūfa on

Abu 'Aun defeats Merwān's son on Little Zāb, 20 xii. 131 A.H. Aug., 749 A.D.

Merwān II. at last takes the field.

[1] The title Amīr is Arabic and ancient, denoting "Commander." The appointment of Wazīr (usually written Vizier) or Minister is a distinguishing feature of the 'Abbasid as contrasted with the Umeiyad dynasty. The word is usually derived from the Arabic root *wazara*, "to bear a burden," but it is probably from a Pahlawi word meaning "to decide." Hebrew *gezar*, Darmesteter, *Études iraniennes*, i. 58; *Al-Fakhri*, p. 205.

A.H. 130-132.

Battle of the Zâb, 11 vi. 132 A.H. Jan. 25, 750 A.D.

Friday, November 28, 749 A.D. (12 iv. 132 A.H.—was able from Al-Kûta heavily to reinforce Abu 'Aun. To give the army also an Imperial bearing, he sent his uncle 'Abdallâh as commander-in-chief: and to him accordingly Abu 'Aun resigned the state-pavilion, mark of supreme command. 'Abdallâh found Merwan encamped with his great host on the right bank of the Zab, and Abu 'Aun with only 20,000 on the left. A party of the latter crossed, but after a skirmish retired. Next day, Merwan, against advice, threw a bridge across the river, and advanced to fight. His son at the first beat back a column of the enemy; and Abu 'Aun, lest the report should dishearten the army, resolved at once to bring on a general action. Historians tell us that Merwan did nothing that day to prosper; but the real truth is that the Syrians had lost both loyalty and heart. Abu 'Aun made his men dismount on the first attack and plant their lances in the ground; while 'Abdallah incited them, as the heroes of Khorasan, to revenge the death of his nephew Ibrâhim; he shouted, *Yâ Mohammad! Ya Mansûr!* and the battle-cry was taken up by all around. Merwan, on his side, called aloud to the Arab tribes, one after another by name, to advance, but none responded to the call. Then in an evil moment, expecting thereby to raise their zeal, he made known that he had treasure in the camp and would reward the brave; on which, some of the soldiers hastened thither, hoping at once to seize the prize. To prevent this, Merwan detached his son; and as he turned aside with guard and standard to protect the camp, the army took it for flight; and with the cry *Defeat! Defeat!* broke and gave way. Merwan, to stay the flight, cut the bridge adrift; and more were drowned in the Zâb than perished by the sword.[1] This battle, which sealed the fate of the Umeiyad Caliphate, took place in the year 132 A.H., or 750 A.D. 'Abdallah remained for a week on the field, and

Defeat and flight of Merwân II.

[1] Observing a grandson of 'Abd al-Melik struggling in the waves, 'Abdallah, the new Caliph's brother, is said to have cried, "Let him alone," quoting from the Kor'ân the passage on the destruction of the Egyptians: "And (remember) how We divided the sea and saved you alive, but drowned the host of Pharaoh therein, while ye looked on." Sûra, ii. 49.

reported his victory to Abu'l-'Abbās, who, overjoyed at the tidings, ordered 500 golden pieces, and promise of increased pay, to be given to every combatant. A.H. 130-132.

Merwān fled. At Mosul, his followers cried out, "It is the Caliph, let him cross." "A lie," they answered from the other bank, "the Caliph doth not fly"; and so they showered abuse upon the fallen Monarch, and glorified the triumphant "House of the Prophet." Merwān then made the best of his way to Ḥarrān, where he spent some weeks in the vain endeavour to raise another army. But 'Abdallah was on his track, and so he hurried on to Ḥimṣ, and thence, receiving no support, to Damascus. But neither could he safely make any stay there, and so desiring the governor, his son-in-law, to hold on and raise another army, he fled to Palestine, where he found refuge with an Arab chief at Abu Fuṭrus (Antipatris). His flight.

Meanwhile, under orders from Al-Kūfa, 'Abdallah had advanced from the Zāb to Mosul, where the people streamed forth to meet him with open arms, clad in the black colours of the new dynasty. At Ḥarrān, the governor, Merwān's nephew, came out in similar attire to make his submission; and there 'Abdallah avenged the death of Ibrāhīm, his nephew, by the unmeaning demonstration of demolishing the house which had formed his prison.[1] Passing onward to Syria, he received the adhesion of all the chief places by the way. At Damascus reinforcements joined him from Al-Kufa under his brother Ṣaliḥ, raising the force to 80,000. The city closed its gates against him, but after a short resistance was stormed, and the governor slain. Thereupon the black standard of the 'Abbāsids was unfurled in triumph on the Citadel, the 14th Ramaḍān, 132 A.H., eight months from the entry of the Hāshimī into Al-Kūfa, and three from the battle of the Zāb. After a short stay, 'Abdallah passed on to Palestine in pursuit of Merwan, but found that he had fled to Egypt. Then, under orders from the new Caliph, he despatched his brother Ṣāliḥ and Abu 'Aun with a force to follow up the fugitive. At As-Ṣa'id he found that, to stay pursuit, Merwan's followers had burned all supplies of grass and

Damascus taken by 'Abdallah, brother of Abu'l-'Abbās,

April 26, 750 A.D.

Merwān II. pursued in Egypt, xi. 132 A.H. June, 750 A.D.

[1] This action is in favour of the impression that Ibrāhīm did not die a violent death.

A.H. 130-132.

fodder in the neighbourhood. From Fustat Salih detached Abu 'Aun with a column, which took prisoners a troop of cavalry still attached to the fallen Caliph. Some they put to death; the rest were faithless enough to purchase their lives by disclosing their Master's hiding-place. He had taken refuge in a church at Busir, where surprised by a small party he was overpowered and slain, just as the year expired (August, 750 A.D.).

Slain, 26 xii. 132 A.H. Aug. 5. 750 A.D.

Head sent to Abu'l-'Abbas.

His head was sent to Salih, who had the tongue cut out and thrown contemptuously to a cat. Thus disfigured it was despatched to Al-Kufa. On seeing it, Abu'l-'Abbas bowed low in adoration. Then raising his head towards heaven, he praised the Lord who had given him victory and revenge over an ungodly race. He recited also a verse indicative of the fire that still burned within his heart:—"Had they quaffed my blood, it had not quenched their thirst; so neither is my wrath slaked by theirs." True to the sentiment, he named himself (as we shall see) *As-Saffâh*, the Blood-thirsty, and by that title he has ever since been known.

His sons and daughters.

Two of Merwan's sons fled to Abyssinia, where, attacked by the natives, one was killed; the other escaped, and lived long concealed in Palestine, from whence he was sent many years after to the Court of Al-Mehdi. The ladies of Merwan's family had been placed for safety in a church, from which they were dragged to the presence of Salih.[1] Before him the elder daughter pleaded for mercy. She was answered with reproaches for the cruel treatment by her people of the house of Hashim:—"How," said the Caliph's uncle, "can I spare any of this wicked race?" Again she pleaded for grace and mercy:—"Nay," he replied, "but if thou wilt, thou mayest marry my son and save thyself." "What heart have I now for that?" she answered; "but send us back to Harrân again." And when they returned there, and saw the old home and palace of Merwan, they lifted up their voices and wept.

His character.

Merwan was over threescore years at his death, and had reigned for nearly six. His mother was a Kurdish slave-girl, and from her he inherited a handsome counten-

[1] The servant, in whose charge they were, is said to have had instructions to put them to death if Merwân should have lost his life.

ance, with blue eyes and a ruddy complexion. He was called the *Ass of Mesopotamia*, perhaps not in derision, but in virtue of his great power of physical endurance. Others say, because he was fond of the peony, of which asses are fond; or his real by-name was Al-Faras (the Horse), which the people of Khorāsan changed to the Ass. He was one of the bravest and best of his house, and deserved a better fate.[1] A.H. 130-132.

So perished the Umeiyad dynasty. Its reliance had been altogether upon the temporal power; it was religious only in name. Its sovereigns, as far as they had any religion, were Unitarians and so might be called Muslims; but in the matter of drinking wine and of most other things, they set Islām at nought. This fact was so clearly appreciated by the theologians of the time as to give rise to a school which held that no Muslim would be called to account for his sins until after the Resurrection, and that, at any rate, none, however Umeiyad he might be, would be eternally lost. These astute philosophers were named Murjīya—Putters off. End of Umeiyad dynasty.

The Syrians had let Merwān, whom they hated, perish, and only too late discovered that his ruin was theirs. The seat of government passed from Damascus to Al-Kūfa. Al-'Irak recovered the hegemony which it had held, though not undisputed, under 'Ali. As the Syrians, so also the Arabs ceased to be the ruling race. Henceforth there was no distinction of Arab and non-Arab; the Mawāli came into their own. The people who gained most were the people of Khorāsan. They formed a kind of military aristocracy. Bagdad was their barracks later on.

[1] He was also called Al-Ja'di, from professing the heretical views of Al-Ja'd, a theologian who held the doctrine of Free-will, and denied that the Ḳor'ān was eternal and uncreate. But this may have been one of the calumnies heaped by the 'Abbāsid courtiers on the house of Umeiya. His mother was the Um Weled of Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ashtar, taken over by his father the day her master was slain.

CHAPTER LX

THE 'ABBĀSID DYNASTY

132-656 A.H. 750-1258 A.D.

IN passing from the Umeiyad to the 'Abbāsid Caliphate, we reach in many respects a fresh departure which justifies a pause and some words in explanation of the change.

New features in the 'Abbāsid Caliphate.

The first new feature is, that while the Umeiyad Caliphate, from first to last, was co-ordinate with the limits of Islām, this is no longer true of the 'Abbāsid. The authority of the new dynasty was never acknowledged in Spain; and throughout Africa, excepting Egypt, it was but intermittent and for the most part nominal; while in the East, as time rolled on, independent dynasties arose. Islām was thus broken up into many fragments, not necessarily in any way dependent on the Caliphate, each with its own separate history. But with all this, the 'Abbāsid remained the only dynasty that truly represented the proper Caliphate. Monarchs reigning in Cordova could only be recognised as "Caliphs," in so far as every supreme ruler of Islām holds in his hand the spiritual as well as the secular authority, and may thus in some sense claim to be the Caliph or *Successor* of the Prophet. The 'Abbāsids alone had any colour of pretension to the name by virtue of legitimate succession.[1]

The Caliphate no longer co-ordinate with Islām.

Remainder of this work.

It being, then, my sole object to trace the Caliphate, properly so called, to its close, the rest of this work will be restricted to a narrative of the dynasty of the 'Abbāsids as they rose first to the crest of glory, then sank gradually under the sway of Sultans and Grand Wazirs, and at last ended a

[1] The Spanish dynasty, though sprung from the line of Umeiyad Caliphs, did not at first venture to assume the title. 'Abd ar-Rahmān III. (Abderame, 300-350 A.H.) was the first who did so.

mere phantom, vanishing into the shadowy pageantry of attendants on the Memlūk kings of Egypt. Events outside the Caliphate will only so far be noticed as they bear upon the individual history of the dynasty.[1] Thus alone will it be possible to keep the remainder of this book within reasonable dimensions.

A.H. 132-656.

Restricted to 'Abbāsid Caliphate.

Another marked feature in the era on which we enter is the change which now comes over the Arab people, and the attitude of the new dynasty towards them. To their hardy life and martial fire were mainly due the first spread of Islām and material prosperity of the Caliphate. But the race had by this time lost much of its early hardihood and vigour. Enriched with the spoil of conquered peoples, the temptations to pride and luxury had gradually sapped their warlike virtue, and so they either settled down with well-filled *ḥarīms*, living sumptuously at their ease; or, if they still preferred the field, yielded there to petulance, rivalries, and insubordination, preferring too often the interests of person, family, and tribe, to the interests of Islām. The fervour of religious enthusiasm had in great measure passed away, and self-aggrandisement had taken the place of passion for national glory and extension of the Faith. The Saracen was no longer the conqueror of the world.

Arab nation loses martial vigour.

Added to this, the 'Abbāsids on their accession lost all confidence in their own Arab race; indeed, they had already done so for several years before. They were brought to the throne and supported there, not by them but by levies from Persia and Khorasān; while of the Umeiyads, the Syrians remained the last support, and the Arab tribes, whether Modar or the Yemen, were ranged upon their side. Ibrahim felt this so strongly, that in the letter intercepted by Merwan, in which he chided Abu Muslim for his delay in crushing Naṣr and Al-Kirmani,[2] he added angrily,—"See that there be not one left in Khorasan whose tongue is the tongue of the Arabian, but he be slain!" It was among the Arabs of Syria and Mesopotamia that dangerous revolt repeatedly took

Cast off by 'Abbāsids,

[1] The 'Abbāsids spoke of themselves as *the* Dynasty (Daula) or New Age.

[2] See above, p. 425.

A.H. 132-656.

who throw themselves into hands of Turks and Persians.

place against the new dynasty, and so they continued to be looked askance upon. Before long the Caliphs drew their bodyguard entirely from the Turks about the Oxus; and that barbarous race, scenting from afar the delights of the South, was not slow to follow in their wake. Before long they began to overshadow the noble Arab chieftains; and so we soon find the Imperial forces officered almost entirely by Turkomans, freedmen or slaves, of strange descent and uncouth name. In the end the Caliphs became the helpless tools of their rude protectors: and the Arabs, where not already denationalised by city life, retired to roam at will in their desert wilds.

Under the 'Abbásids the old aristocracy gave place to a class of government officials. At the head of these was the Wazír (Vizier). He was the representative of the Caliph who appeared only on high occasions. By his side stood the executioner, an officer unheard of under the Umeiyads. He represented the relation of the monarchs of Persia to their subjects. Persian influence introduced also the court astrologer, whose word was law even on military expeditions. The subordinate officials were for the most part Christians and Jews. Perhaps the most influential of all was the system of posts which permeated the whole Empire, and was taken over from the Persians as these had taken it from the Babylonians. The Caliph was thus kept informed of all that was going on even in the most distant provinces in the shortest time possible. The posts were, in fact, trusty spies, who kept an eye even on the provincial governors themselves.

Persian influences.

With the rise of Persian influence, however, the roughness of Arab life was softened; and there opened an era of culture, toleration, and scientific research. The practice of oral tradition was also giving place to recorded statement and historical narrative,—a change hastened by the scholarly tendencies introduced from the East.

To the same source may be attributed the ever-increasing laxity at Court of manners and morality; and also those transcendental views that now sprang up of the divine Imámat or spiritual leadership of some member of the house of 'Alí; as well as the rapid growth of free thought.

These things will be developed as we go on. But I have thought it well to draw attention at this point to the important changes wrought by the closer connection of the Caliphate with Persia and Khorāsān, caused by the accession of the 'Abbāsids. A.H. 132-656.

CHAPTER LXI

ABU'L-'ABBAS AS-SAFFAH

132-136 A.H. 749-754 A.D.

A BRIEF review may here be necessary, to recall the circumstances attending the establishment of the new Caliphate at Al-Kūfa.

Saffāh, 132 A.H. 750 A.D.

In a previous chapter we have seen that while Merwan still tarried at Harran, Ibn Hubeira, the Umaiyad general, was defeated in the vicinity of Al-Kūfa by the army of Kahtaba, and obliged to fall back on Wāsit. Abu Salama, heretofore the busy leader and agent of the Hashimi cause in Khorasan, now came and encamped at Al-Kūfa in the beginning of the year 132 A.H., where, meeting with little opposition, he took possession of the city, and for a time carried on the government under the simple title of "Wazir of the house of Mohammad." On the arrest of Ibrahim, two or three years before, his two brothers with all the relatives of the house of Hashim had fled from Al-Homeima to Al-Kufa, where they remained ever since in concealment. They were now taken charge of by Abu Salama, but for several weeks still kept by him in the strictest privacy. When urged to declare at once the advent of the new dynasty, he said that it would be premature and dangerous so long as Ibn Hubeira maintained his stand at Wāsit. Some suspected him of favouring the other branch of Hashimi stock, that, namely, descended from 'Ali, but of these none had now the ambition or the courage to come forward. However that may be, the 'Abbasid party were impatient at the delay, and learning that Ibrahim, late head of the House, had

'Abbasid family brought into Kūfa, ii. 132 A.H. Oct., 749 A.D.

declared his younger brother Abu'l-'Abbās (son of a noble mother, his brother Abu Ja'far being son of a slave-girl) his successor, they brought him out openly; and finding the people with them, proceeded to a public demonstration. It was about three months after the occupation of Al-Kūfa by the Hashimi troops that, apparently with the consent of Abu Salama, they mounted Abu'l-'Abbās upon a piebald horse, entered the palace, and thence proceeded to the Great Mosque. There the new Caliph ascended the pulpit and made his first address. He magnified the virtues and claims of the descendants of the Prophet, denounced the usurpation and crimes of the Umeiyads and their Syrian followers, praised the Kūfans for their fidelity to his family, which he promised to reward by an increase of their stipends; and ended by declaring it his mission to root out all opposition, for, said he, "I am the Great Revenger, and my name *As-Saffāḥ*, the Shedder of Blood."[1] His uncle Dā'ūd followed with still fiercer words. He styled Merwān "the enemy of the Lord and Caliph of the Devil," and affirmed that the only real successors of the Prophet were two;—'Alī his son-in-law, who had stood in that very pulpit, and now another standing in it, even Abu'l-'Abbās, the true Commander of the Faithful. "Delay not then," he said, "to take the oath of fealty. The dominion is ours, and with us it will remain, till the day when we shall render it up to Jesus Son of Mary." Having thus delivered themselves, they both descended from the pulpit, and entered the castle, whither the people flocked till it was dark, doing homage to the new Caliph. As-Saffāḥ then returned to the encampment of Abu Salama, where for some months he occupied with him the same abode.[2]

A.H. 132-136.

Homage done to Abu'l-'Abbās. 12 iii. 132 A.H. Oct. 29, 749 A.D.

By and by As-Saffāḥ became alienated from Abu Salama, whether from any well-grounded suspicion of unfriendly

[1] Saffāḥ means one who slaughters many beasts for his guests, hence, very hospitable, or, generally, liberal. The sense of bloodthirsty does not seem to be intended.

[2] The "same apartment," we are told, separated by a simple curtain between the two. This does not look as if suspicion existed, at any rate at this time, against Abu Salama, of 'Alid tendencies or other disloyalty.

A.H. 132 / 750.

Caliph retires to Hashimiya.

feeling, 'Alid, or other, cannot be said. But, whatever the cause, quitting now his house at Al-Kūfa, the new Caliph repaired to Al-Anbar, in the neighbourhood of which he laid the foundation of a courtly residence, and called it after his family *Al-Hashimeya*. From thence he despatched his uncles and other relatives, among whom were several of fair ability, with commands in various directions to replace the officers of the fallen dynasty. Acting under his direction, these soon earned for As-Saffāḥ a solid claim to the sanguinary title he aspired after.

Umeiyad house pursued to death.

Wholesale butchery in Palestine, 133 A.H. 751 A.D.

His first care was to sweep from the face of the earth the entire Umeiyad race. Such wholesale butcheries cast into the shade anything the previous dynasty had ever been accused of. The cruellest of them was that perpetrated by the Caliph's uncle in Palestine. An amnesty was offered to the numerous branches of the family congregated there; and to confirm it they were invited, some ninety in number, to a feast. Suddenly a bard arose reciting in verse the evil deeds of the Umeiyads, and on signal given, the attendants fell on the unsuspecting guests, and put them all to death. A carpet was drawn across the ghastly spectacle, and the tyrant resumed his feast over the still quivering limbs of the dying. All in whose veins ran the blood of Umeiyad princes were relentlessly pursued, and only such as were of tender years,[1] or successfully effected flight, escaped. At Al-Basra, the like scene was soon after enacted; the miserable victims were slain, and their remains cast into the streets to be devoured of dogs. Those that escaped wandered about in terror, seeking vainly in disguise some place of secrecy. One such, a descendant of Abu Sufyān, finding his life a burden, cast himself at the feet of an uncle of the Caliph, who, touched with pity, obtained a rescript not only sparing him, but granting a general amnesty to such as still survived. Nevertheless in the following year, we find another less merciful uncle of As-Saffāḥ, initiating a fresh slaughter of those who had taken shelter in the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medīna.

Desecration of dead.

Nor did it suffice that they should vent their rage on the living, the fear of whose machinations might possibly be pleaded in feeble excuse. The tombs of the Caliphs were

[1] The phrase used by the historian is "sucklings."

unearthed. Those of 'Omar and, curiously enough, of Mu'āwiya were spared. Of Mu'awiya and the other Umeiyad Caliphs in Damascus, Dābiḳ, Ar-Ruṣāfa, Ḳinnasrin, and elsewhere, there was nothing that remained but dust; excepting only Hishām, whose frame was found in singular preservation. This they scourged with whips, hung up for a while, and then burned, scattering the ashes to the winds. Such outrage raised indignation throughout Syria and Mesopotamia. Umeiyad households also were treated with indignity by the creatures of the new dynasty. One of its minions, caught in the act of carrying off as slaves the *ḥarīm* of the distinguished warrior Maslama, was slain by the governor of Ḳinnasrin, which forthwith rose in rebellion. All Syria, both Ḳeis and Kelb, with Damascus at its head, followed suit. The Caliph's uncle 'Abdallah, at that moment quelling a rising in the Ḥaurān, came to terms with the insurgents, and hastened to the north, where he was met by a defiant force of 40,000 men. After much fighting and varying fortune, he defeated his enemy and restored order. A still more dangerous revolt threatened Hāshimi rule in Mesopotamia, where an army of 60,000 Syrians in the field laid siege to Ḥarran. To meet the emergency, As-Saffāḥ detached a column, under command of his brother Abu Ja'far, from the army then besieging Ibn Hubeira in Wāsiṭ. This force advancing to the northern coasts of the Euphrates, dispersed the insurgents, but with some difficulty, for Sumeisaṭ was not recovered till after a siege of seven months. Al-Baṣra also resisted all attempts of the Hāshimi general, supported by a column from Khorāsān. That unfortunate city was also distracted within, apart altogether from the 'Abbasid attack; for the Moḍar party, having got the ascendency after severe fighting, overthrew the opposite faction; and the city — suffering thus whichever party conquered — was for three days given up to pillage and outrage. The Umeiyad leaders, however, kept possession of it until Wāsiṭ fell.

A.H. 132-136.

Rebellion in Syria and Mesopotamia.

These risings, if guided by an able leader with united interest and common design, might have changed the order of events, and raised the fallen dynasty, which still had Syria for its support. It failed mainly from the fatal step of Ibn Hubeira, who, as we have seen, instead of hastening north

A.H. 132-136.

Ibn Hubeira capitulates at Wásit.

to his support at the call of Merwan, fell back on Wasit and there shut himself up with the flower of the Umayyad troops. He was afraid (so we are told) of Merwan, because he had not obeyed the order to detach troops for the support of Nasr in Khorasan; but whatever the cause, the delay proved fatal to his master, for defeat in Syria was beyond comparison more to be dreaded than the loss of Wasit, important as it was. The siege of that cantonment was pressed vigorously by Ibn Kahtaba. The powerful garrison made no way against him, partly owing to the depressing influences of a falling dynasty, and partly to the tribal jealousies which still paralysed them, for the Yemen quarrelled with Nizar (Mudar and Rabi'a). Thus things went on for eleven months, during which the Umayyad cause was being lost in Syria. At last, the new Caliph, recalling his brother Abu Ja'far from the north, sent him to take the command at Wasit; and tidings of Merwan's death having meanwhile reached Ibn Hubeira, he thereupon offered to capitulate.[1] A full amnesty concluded by Abu Ja'far was ratified by the Caliph under solemn oath; and Abu Ja'far, who received Ibn Hubeira graciously, was intent upon respecting it. But the Caliph, having consulted Abu Muslim then at Merv, and received his counsel to get Ibn Hubeira "as a stumbling-stone out of his way," persistently urged his death. Finally As-Saffah sent two creatures of his own to do the deed, if Abu Ja'far should still decline. Abu Ja'far gave way; and the officers belonging to Nizar were invited to an interview, bound two and two by a party concealed in an adjoining apartment, and, spite of their appeal to the Caliph's solemn oath, beheaded. The Yemeni officers were spared. Ibn Hubeira was at the same time slain, along with his son, by two emissaries of the Caliph, who repaired to his house under pretence of taking over treasure. The historian adds pathos to the cruel tale of perfidy; for he tells us that Ibn Hubeira, suspecting no treachery, had at the moment on his knee a

Treacherously put to death with followers.

Ibn Hubeira slain.

[1] When he heard of Merwán's defeat and death, he is said to have written to Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallah, a great grandson of Al-Ḥasan son of 'Ali, offering to support his claim to the throne, but waiting long for a reply, and the Caliph's emissaries having come to terms with the Yemeni party in his army, he capitulated: of this Ibn 'Abdallah we shall hear more in the next reign.

little son, whom they snatched from his embrace as he fell on his knees imploring mercy.[1] A.H. 132-136.

Bloodshed in Mosul.

Notwithstanding that the Hāshimi banner everywhere prevailed, outrage still survived in many parts of the Empire. A terrible calamity overtook Mosul. The people refusing obedience to the new governor as a low-born stranger, expelled him from their city. On this, the Caliph sent his brother Yaḥya, who proved himself worthy of his relationship to the "Shedder of blood." The townsmen were persuaded to gather in the court of the Mosque, under promise of full security, but the gates were no sooner closed upon them than they were massacred to a man.[2] The city, deprived thus of its protectors, was given up for three days to sack and outrage. Besides the regular soldiery, there were with the troops 4000 negroes who shamelessly violated the women, till one of these, bolder than the rest, appealed to Yaḥya, the reins of whose horse she seized, and asked whether followers of the Prophet were now abandoned to the embrace of slaves. To appease the outcry, the entire body of the negroes was put to the sword. The Caliph is said to have removed his brother for cruelty thus even beyond his own, but nevertheless put him over another Province.

Fighting elsewhere.

Elsewhere troubles prevailed to the end of the reign. The Viceroy of Sind and India refused to recognise Hāshimi rule; after heavy fighting he was beaten, and died of thirst in his flight through the desert. Al-Baṣra being at last reduced by a force of veterans from Khorāsān, the adherents of the old dynasty fled to 'Oman, where they were joined by a vast host of Khawārij. They were in the end defeated by the Imperial troops, and incredible numbers slain or burned to death. In Khorāsān there were similar outbreaks with even greater slaughter. The rebels of Bokhara, Soghd, and Ferghana were aided by "the king of China," but put

[1] The Caliph's oath of amnesty was couched in the most stringent and solemn terms, and condign punishment from "the Searcher of hearts" was invoked on him who might violate its conditions. The historian adds (but hardly by way of justification) that Ibn Hubeira once addressed Abu Ja'far as "O man" or by some such term; but immediately apologised for it as a slip of the tongue.

[2] The numbers are given at 10,000, but probably with the usual exaggeration of the slaughter made in the reign of As-Saffāḥ.

A.H. 132-136.

to flight by Ziyad, governor of Samarkand, with terrible carnage.[1]

Abu Salama treacherously put to death, 747-750 A.D.

We have seen that the Caliph on his accession, after living for some time in closest intimacy with Abu Salama, one of the leading supporters of the Hashimi cause in Khorasan and their Wazir ("Vizier") at Al-Kufa, became alienated from him, and so departed from his residence to Al-Anbar. Abu Salama had, like everyone else, expected the Mehdi to be of the house of 'Ali. The Caliph wrote to Abu Muslim at Merv for his advice, which was that he should be put to death. The Caliph was dissuaded from ordering the execution by an uncle who dwelt on the danger of revenge by Abu Salama's influential followers from Khorasan, and suggested that Abu Muslim should be asked to send an assassin for the purpose. This was done. As-Saffah then ordered a crier to go forth and proclaim Abu Salama as "the man whom the Caliph delighteth to honour." So he was called and arrayed in a robe of honour, and entertained by the Caliph till night was far advanced. As he wended his way home alone, he was waylaid and assassinated. Report was diligently spread that the Khawarij had done the deed; but all well knew where the motive lay.[2]

Abu Muslim in Khorāsān.

Shortly after, Abu Ja'far was deputed to Merv, with the view of feeling the pulse and attitude of Abu Muslim himself; and there conceived towards him a bitter animosity. As Viceroy of Khorasan, Abu Muslim exercised an unlimited

[1] 50,000 slain beyond the Oxus, and 20,000 taken prisoners. In 'Oman, 900 Khawarij were killed in battle, and 30 burned alive. Afterwards the troops attacked the town, which was built of wood, and pouring naphtha on the houses, set them thus ablaze; then rushing sword in hand on the terrified inhabitants, they slew 10,000. "All roasted, and the heads sent to Al Basra." One may hope that these butcheries are vastly exaggerated; but they point to the lamentable disregard for human life that now prevailed.

[2] This is the most received report. Another is that the Caliph, fearing that Abu Muslim shared the 'Alid tendencies of which Abu Salama was suspected, sent Abu Ja'far to sound Abu Muslim; and that the latter, to prove his loyalty, despatched an assassin who committed the deed as above narrated.

Abu Muslim at the same time sent agents to put to death all the governors who had been appointed by Abu Salama while he ruled in Fars.

and, as Abu Ja'far thought, a dangerous supremacy. Thus for an imprudent word, and on slight and arbitrary suspicion, he put to death Ibn Kethīr, one of the earliest and most valuable advocates of the Hashimi mission in Khorasān.[1] This was done openly before Abu Ja'far, who, as we shall see, never forgot the crime, and on his return to Al-'Irāḳ told his brother that he was no longer Caliph unless he got rid of this wilful autocrat. The Caliph took it to heart, but bade his brother for the present keep the matter secret. A year or two later, Ziyād the governor of Samarḳand, which had recently been strongly fortified, set up for himself, and Abu Muslim went to fight against him. On the way he discovered that an emissary of the Caliph (who is accused of having himself instigated the rebellion in order to weaken the too powerful Viceroy) was in his camp in league with Ziyad, and that he had instructions to compass his death. The plot, thus coming to light, miscarried. Ziyād was deposed and put to death by his own subjects, and the would-be assassin beheaded.

A.H. 132-136.

Attempt to assassinate him, 135 A.H.

In the following year, Abu Muslim, undeterred by the machinations at the Court, asked permission to visit the Caliph at Al-Anbār, and thence proceed on pilgrimage to Mecca. Leave was granted, but his following limited to 1000 men. He started with 8000, but left 7000 at Ar-Reiy. The Caliph received him with every mark of honour, and gave permission to proceed to Mecca, but informed him that his brother Abu Ja'far would probably be appointed to preside at the pilgrimage, a dignity Abu Muslim had apparently expected for himself. Meanwhile Abu Ja'far, who now resided at the Court, and both hated and feared the Viceroy, persuaded his brother to order his execution; he was to be cut down from behind as he was conversing with the Caliph. But the Caliph changed his mind. Dreading the revenge of the Khorasān troops, should he put their favourite to death, he withdrew the order. The pilgrimage accordingly was undertaken by Abu Ja'far and

Abu Muslim's pilgrimage with Abu Ja'far, 136 A.H.

[1] Abu Muslim was jealous of this man's influence; and had conceived a hatred for him, because when Ibrāhīm first selected Abu Muslim as the Hāshimi plenipotentiary in Khorasān, Ibn Kethir had sought to dissuade him on account of his extreme youth. Abu Muslim never forgave him, and now took advantage of the incautious speech to put him to death.

A.H. 132 750. Abu Muslim both together. But though the former led the ceremonial, he was outshone by the splendour of Abu Muslim's equipage and his princely liberality. The pilgrimage completed, tidings of the Caliph's death reached the returning caravan. Abu Jafar had Abu Muslim now entirely in his power, but he was obliged, as will be explained in the following chapter, to veil his hatred for a time.

Abu l'Abbas dies at 33 y. 136 A.H. June 9. 754 A.D. As-Saffah died of small-pox in his palace at Al-Anbar, a few days after the pilgrimage at Mecca was ended. His age is given at from twenty-eight to thirty-five years. He left a daughter,[1] afterwards married to her cousin the Caliph Al-Mehdi. As-Saffah was vain of his appearance and little is said by the annalists of his death, beyond a description of the varied wardrobe which he left behind. It is also related of him, that as he stood looking at himself in a mirror, he exclaimed, "I do not say, as Sulaiman, *Behold the lovely youth*;[2] but I say, *Lord give me long life, and health to enjoy it.*" As he spoke, he heard a slave say to his fellow hard by, regarding some mutual concern, "The term between us is two months and five days." He took it as an evil augury; and so he sickened, and death overtook him as the term expired.

Palace of Hashimiya, and public works. Thus closed the sanguinary reign of As-Saffah, which lasted a little less than five years, during the last two of which he resided in the palace now completed at Al-Anbar. Of public undertakings, the only thing we are told is that he had towers constructed for protection of the pilgrims at convenient distances all the way from Al-Kufa to Mecca, and also mile-stones. Khalid the son of Barmek (the "Barmekide"), of whom mention has been already made, accompanied Kahtaba from Balkh, and being a man of singular ability, was promoted by the Caliph to be chief of the Exchequer, and with the rest of the family attained a high position at Court.[3] In the last year of his reign

[1] Only a daughter, we are told. A son indeed is mentioned as accompanying 'Isa in the expedition against the 'Alids, 145 A.H.; but as he is not spoken of elsewhere, he was probably of ignoble birth.

[2] Above, p. 368.

[3] The 'Abbasids are distinguished by delegating the transaction of their business to Wuzara (pl. of Wazir) or prime ministers, an office unknown under the Umeyads. Khalid ibn Barmek may be considered the first of these, in the official sense.

A.H. 132-136.

'Isa nominated heir-apparent after Abu Ja'far.

As-Saffah nominated his nephew 'Īsa to be heir-apparent after his brother Abu Ja'far. The patent, inscribed upon a silken sheet, and sealed with the signets of the Caliph and of the chief heads of the family, was placed in custody of himself, now governor of Al-Kūfa.

Saffāh the Blood-thirsty.

The name by which this Caliph is most commonly known, *As-Saffah*, the Blood-thirsty, is well chosen; for as such he is distinguished beyond all others in a dynasty that had small respect for human life. He intensified his cruelty and guilt, if that were possible, by treachery in the face of solemn oaths, and also by ingratitude, for amongst his victims were not a few who had spent their lives in helping him to the throne. That the attempt should have been made to extenuate his crimes is strange; and is thus referred to by the impartial Weil, in whose judgment I concur;—

"We can but marvel," he says, "that many Europeans have sought to defend this Caliph who was worse than any Umeiyad,—as if he did not deserve the name of Blood-shedder, which indeed he himself assumed. He may not with his own hands have strangled victims; but not the less was it by his express mandate that the Umeiyads in Syria, and Suleimān in his very presence, were perfidiously slain. At his command must Abu Muslim hire the assassin of Abu Salama, to whom the 'Abbāsids owed so much. It was at his repeated requisition that Abu Ja'far, in treacherous disregard of solemn oaths, slew Ibn Hubeira and his fellows; and it certainly is not due to his innocence that the fate of Abu Salama did not during his own reign overtake Abu Muslim also; Abu'l-'Abbās was not merely a barbarous tyrant; he was a perjured and ungrateful traitor."

Such is the not overdrawn character of the first of the 'Abbasids, Abu'l-'Abbas, As-Saffah, the "Blood-shedder."

CHAPTER LXII

ABU JA'FAR AL-MANṢŪR

136-158 A.H. 754-775 A.D.

Abu Ja'far Dhu'l-Hijja, 136 A.H. June, 754 A.D.

AT the death of As-Saffah, Abu Ja'far, as we have seen, was on pilgrimage at Mecca. His cousin, 'Isa, whom the late Caliph had nominated as second in succession, caused Abu Ja'far to be at once proclaimed at Al-Kufa, and the oath of allegiance was taken accordingly. On receiving tidings of his brother's death, Abu Ja'far returned immediately to Al-Kufa. He inaugurated his succession by leading the prayers in the Great Mosque with the usual address, and then went on to the palace at Al-Anbar. He assumed the name of Al-Mansur, the Victorious. He was older than As-Saffah, but was the son of a Berber slave-girl, his brother's mother being of the powerful Yemeni clan, al-Hārith ibn Ka'b.

Rebellion of 'Abdallah, the Caliph's uncle.

Abu Muslim, as already said, was also on pilgrimage with him. Al-Mansur, directly on hearing of his brother's death while on the homeward route, sent for him, and told him that he feared the attitude of his uncle 'Abdallah. Abu Muslim bade him set his mind at ease, promising in the event of 'Abdallah's rebellion to proceed at once against him. There was ground for the alarm. 'Abdallah was in command of a powerful force on the border of Asia Minor. His brother, the late Caliph, had promised him the succession in reward for his campaign against Merwan; and so, persuading the army to do homage to him as Caliph, he set siege to Harran. Al-Mansūr was the more anxious for the services of Abu Muslim, as there were in his uncle's army 17,000 men of Khorasan devoted to their old leader. Abu Muslim now marched against 'Abdallah, who on his

approach raised the siege, and marched east to Naṣibin, where he entrenched himself in a strong position; but on his way, fearing the Khorāsānis just referred to, he cruelly put the whole of them to the sword.[1] To decoy him from his stronghold, Abu Muslim made as if he would march for Syria; on which the rebel army, mostly Syrians, alarmed for their families, insisted upon following the same course; and then Abu Muslim returning, occupied the deserted vantage-ground. Fighting went on for five months with various success, but in the end, through Abu Muslim's able tactics, the Syrian army was totally discomfited. 'Abdallah fled, but was eventually placed under charge of his brother Suleimān, governor of Al-Baṣra.

A.H. 136-158.

Defeated by Abu Muslim, vi. 137 A.H. Nov., 754 A.D.

The thankless Caliph, instead of rewarding a man who had founded, and now had saved, his throne, was bent on his death as one for whom, having served his purpose, he had no further need, and whom he both feared and hated. While yet on the field of battle, the great warrior divined the temper of his master, who, much to his mortification, had sent a courier to take count of the spoil, and bethought him of retiring for safety to Khorāsān. This, in fact, was what the Caliph dreaded; and so with many fair words that he wished to keep him near his person, he offered him the government of Syria and Egypt. Abu Muslim replied that there was ever danger in a powerful subject being near the Court; at a distance he would be the Caliph's devoted servant; but otherwise he would have no alternative but to break allegiance. An angry correspondence ensued, and Abu Muslim began his march to Khorasan. At Holwan, he received a peremptory mandate to repair to Al-Medain, where the Caliph waited for him. Distracted by various counsel,—friends, once faithful, but now won over to deceive, advised him to obey,—and so, trusting to fair promises, he proceeded to the

Fall and death of Abu Muslim, 137 A.H. 755 A.D.

[1] The enormous butchery of 17,000 soldiers is narrated without comment. Cruelty and treachery seem innate in the whole family. On two occasions in this march, 'Abdallah sent chiefs whom he was afraid of, to his creatures elsewhere, with letters which they unsuspectingly carried containing orders for their assassination. One of them had occasion to open his missive, and so escaped.

A.H. 136-158. Court. As he drew near, Abu Eiyub, the Wazir, fearing the warrior and his followers if he came in wrath, bribed one to meet and assure him of the Caliph's favour and good will. Abu Muslim's apprehensions thus disarmed, he entered the palace, and was graciously welcomed: kissing the Caliph's hand, he was bidden to rest awhile and refresh himself with a bath. The following day, again summoned to the Court, the Caliph at first addressed him softly thus:—"Tell me of the two daggers that 'Abdallah had." "Here," said his guest, "is one of them," and he handed it to the Caliph, who put it under his pillow. Then with some warmth,—"And the girl of his whom thou tookest!" "Not so," replied Abu Muslim; "but I feared for her, and so carrying her to a tent left her in safe custody." On this, with growing warmth Al-Mansur brought charge upon charge against the ill-fated man,—Why had he slighted him on the pilgrimage? set out for Khorasan against his orders? made himself out, though once a mere slave, as if of 'Abbasid descent, and sought the hand of the Caliph's aunt? and worst of all, why had he slain Ibn Kethir, long before him an early and faithful supporter of the dynasty?[1] As he waxed fiercer at every charge, Abu Muslim could but urge his lifelong service to the throne, kiss the Caliph's hand, and plead for pardon. But in vain. Al-Mansur clapped his hands, and at the signal five armed men stepped from behind the curtain, and as the victim cried aloud for mercy, cut him in pieces, while the Caliph cursed. To calm the crowd without, it was told them that "the Caliph was in conclave with his Amir"; and believing it to be so, 'Isa, the heir-apparent, entered and asked where Abu Muslim was. "He was here but now," answered the Caliph. "Ah," replied 'Isa, "I knew that he was loyal and would obey thy call." "Fool that thou art!" cried Al-Mansur; —"Thou hadst not in all the world a worse enemy than he; look there!" he said, as the carpet was raised, revealing the mangled corpse. 'Isa, horrified, retired.

[1] See above, p. 443. The charge of making himself out to be of 'Abbasid descent was true enough. When in the zenith of his glory, there were not wanting creatures who, to cover his servile origin, invented a story to that effect; a fatal adulation that only added fuel to the Caliph's jealousy.

Shortly after, Abu Isḥāḳ, one of Abu Muslim's staff, was summoned; "What hast thou now to say about thy master?" asked the Caliph, "and his intended move to Khorāsān!" Terrified, he glanced first to the right and then to the left, as if fearing lest Abu Muslim might be near to overhear. "No need for fear!" exclaimed the Caliph; and the covering was again removed. "Thanks be to the Lord!" cried Abu Isḥaḳ, as he bowed low and long in worship; and, gazing at the corpse, exclaimed,—"Thanks for my deliverance from thee, O tyrant!" Then turning to the Caliph,—"I swear, not a day passed that I felt my life my own for fear of him, nor came into his presence but prepared for death." So saying, he drew aside his robe and disclosed a winding-sheet beneath. Moved with pity, the Caliph spared him the fate which, as an adherent of his fallen chief, he was in expectation of. A.H. 136-158.

Having received the congratulations of his courtiers, who wished him joy that now at last he was the real king, Al-Manṣūr went forth and harangued the multitudes brought together by the startling news:—"It was," he said, "a lesson to be laid to heart; the man began well, but ended ill, and now by pride and rebellion hath forfeited his life." The scene is one the annalists dwell much upon, and rightly so. For Abu Muslim is far and away the greatest figure of the age. Hardly thirty-five years old, he had by his rare wisdom, zeal, and generalship, changed the whole outlook of Islam, and raised the house of Al-'Abbās upon the ruins of the house of Umeiya. He deserved his fate, no doubt, for the blood of multitudes was on his head—but not at the hand of Al-Manṣūr, who owed his all to him. It was jealousy of Abu Muslim's influence that had fed the Caliph's hatred. The estimate of 'Īsa was the truer; for there is nothing in the acts or attitude of Abu Muslim to show that he was other than a loyal supporter of the dynasty which owed its existence to himself.[1] Character of Abu Muslim.

[1] "Six hundred thousand," we are told, "met their death at his hands in cold blood, besides those slain in battle"—a wild estimate, no doubt, but significant of his contempt of life. Apart from this, his character was popular, and gave him the supreme command of men. Hospitable and generous, he held in Khorāsān a court of great magnificence. Simple in respect of his *ḥarīm*, he was yet strangely jealous. The mule that brought his bride was slain and the saddle burnt, that none might ride again on it.

A.H. 137-158.

Story of Abu Naṣr.

The story of Abu Naṣr, whom Abu Muslim had left in charge of his camp at Holwan, is also worth recording. Al-Manṣur, desirous to have this able officer in his power, sent him a summons as if from Abu Muslim, to come at once to him at Court with all his goods, and sealed it with his master's seal. But Abu Muslim had warned his friends not to hold any letter from him genuine unless it bore but half his seal. Detecting the deception thus, Abu Naṣr fled to Hamadan. To calm suspicion, the Caliph then sent a patent appointing him governor of Shahrazur; but at the same time also a letter to the governor of Hamadan to take his life as he passed. The former first arrived, and so starting at once, Abu Naṣr escaped the intended fate. At last, seeing no security anywhere, he sought the Caliph's presence, and confessing that he had advised his master to seek refuge in Khorasan, threw himself on his Sovereign's mercy, and promised faithful service. Al-Manṣur let him go; and his clemency, as we shall see, had its reward.

Peace restored in Persia and Mesopotamia, 138 A.H. 756 A.D.

It was not for another year or two that peace was restored either in Mesopotamia or Persia. In the latter, a serious rising threatened the Empire under a singular leader, Sunbadh the Magian, who stepped forth as the avenger of Abu Muslim, and with a large following gained possession of the country from Ar-Reiy to Nisabur.[1] A similar rebellion followed in Mesopotamia, where the Imperial forces were repeatedly defeated. In the following year, however, victory crowned the army of the Caliph, and peace was restored both there and in Persia.

The Caliph, relieved thus of all the dangers that had threatened him, might now have left his uncle 'Abdallah alone at Al-Basra; but hearing that he had, mistrusting his nephew, retired for safety into hiding, Al-Manṣur sent to his uncles, Suleiman and 'Ali, command to bring him to Court. Relying on the solemn promise of full pardon, they brought him, and presented themselves before the Caliph. He

[1] Whether the Magian counted Abu Muslim one of his followers, is not quite clear. There must apparently have been something more than mere regard for his memory. The rising was serious, as multitudes of women were carried off, and in the end 60,000 of his followers (so we are told) were killed, besides captives. He was two and a half months in the field.

received them graciously, and engaged them in conversation, while his uncle 'Abdallah, who remained without, was carried off a prisoner to the castle. After a little while, he bade them go and rejoin 'Abdallah. Thus overreached, they returned angrily to expostulate, but were denied admittance. Their followers, enraged at the perfidy, would have offered resistance, but were disarmed, several put to death, and the rest sent to Khorāsān, where they met the same fate. The wonder is that in so faithless, treacherous, and cruel a monarch, any confidence anywhere was left. The reason no doubt is that such shameless breach of faith was only practised when personal or dynastic danger threatened. Apart from this, as a whole, the administration of Al-Manṣūr was wise and just.

A.H. 136-158.

Caliph imprisons his uncle 'Abdallah, end of 139 A.H. 757 A.D.

During 138 A.H. Constantine waged war with the Syrian army, and took Malatia, destroying its fortifications. The following year it was retaken, repaired, and heavily garrisoned. The campaign is remarkable for the presence of two princesses, aunts of the Caliph, who joined the army in fulfilment of a vow taken some years before, that if Merwan fell they would serve in the holy war against the infidels. The Caliph now entered on an exchange of prisoners with the Emperor, and a truce of seven years was agreed to; for events at home had begun to occupy every resource at his disposal.

Fighting in Asia Minor, 138-139 A.H.

In 140 A.H. the Caliph performed the yearly pilgrimage, visited Jerusalem, and made a progress through Syria and Mesopotamia. On his return a strange rising placed him in imminent personal danger. A Persian sect, called Rawendiya (from the name of their town), holding such doctrines as the immanence of divinity and transmigration of souls, visited the Court. The commandant of the bodyguard, they held, was inhabited by the soul of Adam; another courtier by that of Gabriel, and so on; while the Caliph was the adumbration of Deity itself. Surrounding the palace, they shouted, "It is the house of our Lord, he that giveth us food to eat and water to drink." The Caliph had 200 of their leaders imprisoned, which so enraged the rest that they stormed the prison and rioted all round. Al-Manṣur ventured forth without an escort to quell the uproar; but the wild sectaries, no longer regarding him divine, made

Pilgrimage, 140 A.H. 758 A.D.

Rising of Rāwendīya at Hāshimīya, 141 A.H.

A.H. 137-158.

an onset, and had it not been for Abu Naṣr (already mentioned) and an Umeiyad adherent who thus secured courtly favour — both throwing themselves between the rioters and the Caliph's person, it would have gone hard with him. Troops fortunately came up at the moment, and the Rāwendiya, on whom the people shut the city gates, were extirpated. The incident is important as showing that 'Abbasid rule was not identified with the extreme Shi'a.[1]

Mehdi's campaign in Khorāsān, 141 A.H.

Soon after, the governor of Khorāsān rebelled, and Al-Manṣūr sent Ibn Khozeima, a general of note, to put the outbreak down, and with him his own son and heir, Al-Mehdi, now about twenty years of age. On their approach, the rebel was attacked by his own people, who, mounting him backward on an ass, sent him thus to the Caliph. Both he and his followers were treated with horrid cruelty, and tortured till they gave up all they possessed. The hands and feet of the rebel governor were cut off; he was then beheaded, and his son sent in banishment to an island in the Red Sea.

And Ṭabaristān, 141-143 A.H. 758-760 A.D.

The Muslim arms were now directed against Ṭabaristān, of which the ruling Ispahend had cast off subordination to Islam. The campaign was prosperous. In the following year, however, the Prince again rebelled, and in his impregnable fortress defied attack. But a pretended deserter having ingratiated himself with him and gained his confidence, opened the gates to the Muslim force. The fortress taken thus, the fighting men were put to the sword, and their families made captive. Al-Mehdi chose two of the maidens for himself, and the Ispahend's daughter was taken by his uncle.[2] The army then turned towards the Deilem; but here the insurrection was so serious, that a fresh levy was ordered from Al-'Irāḳ and Mosul, which was kept in the field all the following year. Meanwhile, Al-Mehdi returned to court; and being now twenty-three years of age, married Rūḥa, the

[1] The Caliph could not find a horse to mount, till he picked up one on his way. Henceforth, a horse saddled and bridled was always kept at the gate.

[2] Such slave-girls are only mentioned in connection with issue born to their masters, otherwise they were taken as the conquerors might fancy into their *ḥarems* as a matter of course, and without any special notice by our historians.

only child of his uncle, the late Caliph. He then returned to Khorāsān, where he remained for some time longer. The Caliph went this year, as he did several other times, to preside at the Meccan pilgrimage. A.H. 136-158. Mehdi returns, 144 A.H. 761 A.D.

A new danger now threatened the dynasty. It was from a descendant of Al-Ḥasan grandson of 'Alī. The head of this family was 'Alī's great-grandson 'Abdallah, whose two sons Moḥammad and Ibrāhīm had for some time held ambitious designs.[1] Al-Manṣūr entertained suspicions against them ever since his first pilgrimage, when they failed to present themselves. As usual, he proceeded by stratagem. A creature of his, by feigned communications from Khorasan, where there ever was a strong faction for any scion of the house of 'Alī, gained their father 'Abdallah's confidence, and succeeded in so implicating him that with all the family he was cast into prison. The two sons, however, escaped to Aden and Sind, and returning secretly to Al-'Irak, now at Medīna, now among the Bedawi tribes,—were hunted everywhere by the Caliph's emissaries. On his pilgrimage in the present year, Al-Manṣūr demanded of the father and relatives, who were still in prison, that they should deliver up the two sons now in hiding. Failing to do so, the family were carried off to Al-Kūfa, and treated with shocking barbarity. The son of Ibrāhīm, a fine youth, was told by the cruel Al-Manṣūr that he would die a death worse than any he had ever heard of; and the tyrant was as good as his word, for he was built up alive into the prison wall.[2] Of the rest, some were slain and some poisoned; but few were spared. The head of one was sent round Khorasān as that of Moḥammad the elder brother, in the hope of disheartening the party there. Moḥammad and Ibrāhīm, descendants of Ḥasan, rebel, 144 A.H.

These atrocities, followed by stringent measures for the discovery of Moḥammad, then in hiding at Medīna, precipitated his rebellion there, while his brother Ibrahim canvassed for him at Al-Baṣra. At Medīna, the city rose, the governor was cast into prison, and the administration proclaimed in the name of Moḥammad, around whom rallied the great body of the citizens, though many Rising at Medīna and Baṣra, 145 A.H. 762 A.D.

[1] See table, p. 385. This Moḥammad is the one with whom Ibn Hubeira tried to communicate when besieged in Wāsiṭ. Above, p. 440 *n.*

[2] I give the story as I find it, though hardly credible.

A.H. 136-145

held back from fear of the Caliph. On tidings reaching the Court,[1] Al-Mansur was much concerned, for, although 'Alid disturbances had hitherto been mainly on the side of Al-Hosein's descendants, the position and claims of the house of Al-Hasan ('Ali's elder son) were, to say the least, not inferior. He at once addressed to Mohammad a despatch, in which, after various threats, he offered pardon and ample maintenance to the whole family. The Protester sent an indignant answer; it was rather for him, he said, to offer pardon to Al-Mansur, who had usurped the rights of the progeny of 'Ali by Fatima the Prophet's daughter, in virtue of whom alone the Hashimi cause had any ground whatever to stand upon. And, even so, what trust could be placed on the word of one who had so flagrantly broken it already with Ibn Hubeira, Abu Muslim, and his own uncle? The Caliph replied in a despatch of weary length, in which, dwelling on the inferiority of woman, he scouted the claim of Fatima and of female descent in general, and extolled the 'Abbasids as the male, and therefore ruling, line of the Prophet's house.[2]

Correspondence between Caliph and Mohammad.

Nothing gained by argument, Al-Mansur had recourse to the sword. He was the more alarmed as it had become a popular cry at Al-Kufa, that "Khorasan was with the 'Abbasids, Al-'Irak with the 'Alids, and Syria with the infidels who would readily follow any rebel." In fact, however, the emissaries of Mohammad found no support in Syria, where, after so much suffering, the people were glad to be at rest; and his chief following was at Mecca, Medina, and Al-Basra. Against Medina, the present centre of rebellion, the Caliph now sent his nephew 'Isa, with a Syrian army. And it is characteristic of his treacherous instincts that he told a familiar he would be equally pleased whichever fell, *Mohammad* or *'Isa*, whom he was now scheming to supplant as heir-apparent, in

'Isa discomfits Mohammad at Medina, 145 A.H. 762 A.D.

[1] The messenger was nine days on the road, and received from the Caliph 9000 dirhems, *i.e.* 1000 for each day.

[2] A very lengthy and curious document: it is, elaborately reviewing the history of the house; *e.g.* Fatima's not inheriting the property of her father, 'Ali not succeeding till after three other Caliphs, the insignificant part taken by 'Ali's family in the *rise* of Islam, etc. It is very unlike a document written under the circumstances, and probably a bit of servile pleading to please the 'Abbasids.

favour of his own son Al-Mehdi. Apart from the prevailing sentiment of sacrilege in fighting against a descendant of Moḥammad, ʻĪsa had no very difficult task. Moḥammad, following the example of the Prophet, set himself to digging a trench about the city: but on the approach of ʻĪsa, the inhabitants fled in crowds, and Moḥammad was left with but a small body of faithful followers. Rejecting an amnesty, he girded on him the Prophet's sword, Dhu'l-Fakār,[1] and went forth to fight, but fell pierced by an arrow. His head, sent to the Caliph, was paraded about Al-Kufa and other cities. He is commonly known by the Puritan name of Pure Soul. At Medīna, the bodies of the slain were hung up along the Syrian road for three days, when they were cast into the Jewish burying-ground; but at the intercession of his sister, that of Moḥammad was buried in the ancient graveyard of the Bakīʻ.[2] Medina suffered severely in consequence of the rebellion. The Syrian troops were so overbearing that the slaves rose *en masse;* the governor had to fly; and it was only the fear that Al-Mansūr would utterly destroy the city, that led the insurgents to call him back. The hands of the leaders were cut off, and peace at last restored. To mark his displeasure, the Caliph stopped the supplies on which the city depended by sea, and the embargo was not removed till the accession of his son.[3]

A.H. 136-158.

14 ix. 145 A.H.

Rising of slaves.

A still graver danger threatened from Al-Baṣra. There, Ibrāhīm, after canvassing in secret, had already raised the standard of rebellion in his brother's name. Ever inclined to insurrection, Al-Baṣra now with ardour embraced the cause; and numbers of the learned,—amongst them the great doctor, Malik ibn Anas,[4]—gave in their adhesion to it. The Imperial troops were defeated, the palace stormed, and the treasure distributed amongst Ibrahim's supporters. Fars, Al-Ahwaz, and Wasiṭ were occupied by the rebels, and other places where the cause was rife. On receiving tidings of his brother's death, Ibrahim set up on his own account, and

Ibrāhīm continues the rebellion at Baṣra.

[1] *Life of Moḥammad*, p 229.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 199.

[3] Supplied from Egypt since the reign of 'Omar. Above, p. 164.

[4] Founder of one of the four great schools of Muslim jurisprudence —the Māliki.

A.H. 136-158.

started for Al-Kūfa, where he had expectations of a general rising. Though here and elsewhere he had 100,000 on his roll, he was followed now but by 10,000. Nevertheless the crisis was sufficiently grave to alarm the Caliph. He was at the moment laying out the new capital of Baghdad; but on receiving tidings of Ibrahim's advance, he hastily retired to Al-Kūfa, where the populace were ready to break out and join the descendant of "their own Caliph 'Ali." The troops were all away in Persia, Africa, and Arabia, and but a small garrison left at headquarters. News kept coming in of defection all around, while at Al-Kūfa "100,000 of the Kūfa rabble were ready to rush against the Caliph with their swords." In the utmost distress Al-Mansur swore that if he got over the crisis, he would never leave the Capital with less than 50,000 men. For seven weeks he kept curtained in his closet, sleeping on his carpet of prayer, and never once changing dress but for his black robes at Public prayer. Two damsels were sent as a gift to him: "They will feel slighted," his attendant said, "if thou wilt not go in unto them." "That I will not," he answered, "it is no day for women this: I will not go in unto any maiden, until I see at my feet the head of Ibrahim,—or mine be cast at his." At last the tide turned. Al-Mehdi sent troops from Ar-Reiy which put down the rising in Fars and Al-Ahwaz, while 'Isa hastened from Medina to anticipate Ibrahim's attack on Al-Kūfa. The two armies encountered each other sixteen leagues from the city. The vanguard of 'Isa's army at first beaten back, carried part of the main body with it, and for the moment, the 'Alid banner seemed in the ascendant; but shortly after Ibrahim was shot by an arrow, and his army fled. He is commonly known as the Slain of Bakhamra (the scene of the battle). Thus after holding the Empire for three months in terror, the 'Alid rebellion came to a close.

Kūfa rises.

Manṣūr alarmed.

Ibrāhīm defeated and slain, 24 xi. 145 A.H.

Manṣūr's joy at the intelligence.

At the first tidings of 'Isa's army giving way, the heart of Al-Mansur failed, and he was on the point of flying to his son at Ar-Reiy. Correspondingly his joy was unbounded when the head of Ibrahim was cast at his feet. "It was like the delight," he said (quoting from the poet), "of the thirsty wayfarer coming on a living stream." But, before the world, he veiled his joy; and as in public he took the gory

head of the rebel in his hands, he wept and spake well of him. His indignation fell terribly upon the city which had supported the claims of the pretender. Not only were houses confiscated and demolished, but, what was a more lasting calamity, the date-groves all around Medīna were cut down. A.H. 136-158.

When this cloud had passed away, Al-Manṣūr returned to the site of his new capital, Bagdad, whose foundations had been laid in the previous year. It was the danger he was exposed to from the onset of the Rāwendiya that first convinced him of the need of a more secure Court residence. The royal residence at Hāshimiya was too near the fickle and restless Kufa, the disloyal factions of which and Al-Baṣra might sap the faithfulness of his guardsmen. Searching as far as Mosul for a likely spot, he found one on the right bank of the Tigris, some fifteen miles above Al-Medāin, mentioned in the wars of Al-Muthanna as "old Bagdād."[1] A monastery was near, and the Patriarch and Monks spoke well of the climate, water, and surroundings. Here, accordingly, Al-Manṣūr resolved to found the new Capital of Islam. The lines of the city wall and chief places were dug,[2] vast stores of material collected, bricks burned, and artificers summoned from all parts of the Empire. The first brick was laid by the Caliph's own hand with these words,—"In the name of the Lord! praise belongeth unto Him and the earth is His: He causeth such of his servants as He pleaseth to inherit the same. Success attend the pious! Now, with the blessing of the Lord, build on!" The walls were but a few feet high when news of Ibrāhim's rebellion made the Caliph hasten back to Al-Kūfa; and the intendant left in charge, fearing lest the mass of stores should fall into the enemy's hands, set them on fire, much to his master's disappointment. No sooner was Ibrahim discomfited, than Al-Mansur returned to the work. Khalid the Barmeki, now put in charge, remonstrated against the demolition of Al-Medain, with its ancient memories of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, to provide material for the new Capital. "The great Īwan

Bagdad founded, 145 A.H. 762 A.D.

146 A.H. 763 A.D.

[1] P. 89.

[2] As a perpetual evidence of the city lines, burnt cotton rags mingled with sand were buried in the foundations; a mode familiar in the East, as the rain causes the cotton ash indelibly to stain the soil all round.

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of the Cheerers," he argued, "is one of the wonders of the world; and there, too, 'Alī had his place of prayer." "Ah!" replied the unconvinced Caliph, "it is not but thine old love for the Persians!" The noble arch, however, hard as iron, withstood the pick-axe. "Now," said Khalid, "I advised thee against it; but as thou hast begun, go on, lest men should upbraid thee, saying that the Caliph began but could not pull down that which another had built up!" So the work went on; but it was of no use. And there on the river's left bank still stands the grand monument in majesty, while all around is now a bare and sandy plain. For the portals, Al-Kūfa, Wāsiṭ, and even Damascus were robbed of their iron gates. The walls were built in a circle so that none of the courtiers might be far from the palace, which with the Great Mosque lay in the centre; while the bazaars were thrust outside.[1]

Bagdad as a military position.

Lying on the west bank of the Tigris, with deep canals in rear, and ready access to the Persian Gulf—as well as to Arabia, Syria, Armenia, and the East—Bagdad, besides holding Al-Kūfa, Wāsiṭ, and Al-Baṣra, in immediate check, was admirably situated as the heart of the Empire. The eastern shore, more open to attack, was provided with accommodation for a large force, which was thus further cut off from the heated influence of Al-Kūfa and Al-Baṣra. Separate cantonments were here also planted for the Yemen and for the Modar clans, as well as for the Khorasān levies. While there was safety in the diverse interests of the three it was to the Khorasān levies that Al-Manṣūr mainly looked for his own protection; and also as a countervailing power to lower the pretensions of the Arab soldiery, who still lorded it over the nations as the flower and chivalry of Islām; and in this unwise design the 'Abbāsids (as already noticed) too soon succeeded, and too well. A few years later, a palace was built also on the eastern bank for Al-Mehdi,

Ruṣāfa, 151 A.H. 769 A.D.

[1] The iron gates from Wāsiṭ were cast by Al-Ḥajjāj, and those of Al-Kūfa by Khālid ibn 'Abdallāh. The Greek ambassador having been taken round the city, said: "It is beautiful: but thine enemies are with thee in the market-places." Whereupon the Caliph had all the bazaars removed outside towards Karkh, saying that they invited attack for plunder, and gave also lodgment for spies. The initial cost was about £200,000. An overseer (ustādh) got every day a ḳīrāṭ of silver, and the common labourer two pence (ḥabbas).

called Ar-Ruṣāfa, and there, on his return from Khorāsān, he welcomed and fêted his friends and kinsmen. A.H. 136-158.

It was hardly in the mind of Al-Manṣūr that his new Capital should become the grand and populous emporium which it speedily did. Rather, he founded it purely for his Court as a strong military position, and enjoined it on his son not to permit the growth of any suburbs, especially on the left bank. The same policy led him to establish on the upper reaches of the Euphrates a strong citadel close to Ar-Raḳḳa, which he called the Rāfiḳa (Companion) and garrisoned with Khorasanis. He is said to have attributed (and with reason) the sudden fall of Merwan to his having had no such stronghold to fly to after his defeat on the Zāb, and hence to have spent the more pains in this direction. The defences of Al-Kūfa and Al-Baṣra were also strengthened.[1] Rāfiḳa and other defences.

In the eleventh year of his reign, Al-Manṣūr resolved on a project long in his mind of making his son Al-Mehdi, now twenty-five years of age, heir-apparent in place of 'Īsa. On his nephew refusing, Al-Manṣur was much displeased, degraded him from the seat of honour on his right, and treated him with contumely. Failing in his endeavours, he told 'Īsa that he knew it was for his son Mūsa he was desirous of the succession; on which some of the courtiers set upon Musa as if to strangle him; and 'Īsa, alarmed at his cries, thereupon consented that Al-Mehdi should precede him as heir-apparent.[2] Mehdi appointed heir-apparent, 147 A.H. 764 A.D.

But Al-Manṣūr hated 'Īsa the more, and contrived a

[1] Both cities were assessed with a poll-tax to defray the expense, for which purpose Al-Manṣūr resorted to a characteristic device. He first distributed a largess of five dirhems to all comers; then taking the numbers of the recipients, he assessed each at forty dirhems. A squib was in everyone's mouth:—

"Mark, my friends, the Caliph's bounty,
He gives us five, and then takes forty."

This device has been used more than once.

[2] The Caliph is even said to have given 'Īsa a poisonous drink, from which, however, retiring for a while to his government at Al-Kūfa, he recovered. Another story is that the Caliph got Khālid the Barmeki to suborn witnesses who swore that 'Īsa had resigned his right. Such traitorous traditions, right or wrong, show what a wretched character for deception Al-Manṣūr bore, which allowed them to get abroad.

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plot,—more cruel and cunning than can well be conceived,—to be rid at once of him and of his uncle 'Abdallah, who still lingered on in prison. He made 'Abdallah over to 'Isa, with the private command to put him to death, while he himself was away on pilgrimage to Mecca. When thus absent, he wrote asking whether the order had been carried out, and was assured that it had. But 'Isa here told an untruth; he had not put his uncle to death. By advice of his secretary, who suspected treachery, he had only put him away in hiding. And so it turned out. For on the Caliph's return, the friends of 'Abdallah were set up to beg for his pardon. This the Caliph granted, and 'Isa was bidden to make 'Abdallah over to them. "Didst thou not bid me put him to death?" said 'Isa; "and I have done as thou badest me." "Thou liest," replied the Caliph; and he made 'Isa over to 'Abdallah's brethren to wreak their vengeance on. But as they were carrying him off, 'Isa upbraided the Caliph: "Thou commandedst me to put him to death, that thou mightest be rid both of him and me, but here he is alive;" and forthwith 'Abdallah was brought out, to the mortification of the Caliph. It was, however, of little avail; for 'Abdallah was cast into a cellar with a damp and deadly saline floor, and so at last expiated his rebellion by a virtually violent death. 'Isa in disgrace was deposed from the government of Al-Kufa, which he had for thirteen years ably administered.

Caliph's double plot against 'Isa and 'Abdallah, 147 A.H. 764 A.D.

'Isa deposed.

Spain.

Turning now to the dependencies of the Empire, we note that Spain was during this reign finally detached from the eastern Caliphate. Even under the former dynasty it had got much out of hand. In a long intestine struggle, Modar had at last triumphed over the Yemen faction, and set up Yusuf as ruler. A son of the Umeiyads was now to take the throne. This was 'Abd ar-Rahmân, grandson of Hisham. He had escaped the massacre of his house in Palestine, and we have a touching story of his flight and wanderings. Hiding in a village by the Euphrates, his little boy rushed to him with the terrified cry, "The black flags! the black flags coming!" 'Abd ar-Rahmân got off with a cousin of thirteen and swam the river; the lad, unable to stem the tide, turned back on the cry of an amnesty, but was put to death by the cruel soldiers. Hiding in the forest by day, and journeying

'Abd ar-Rahmân escaping from Syria,

stealthily by night, 'Abd ar-Rahman at last reached Africa, where he was joined by his sister, and a faithful servant Bedr with the family jewels. He narrowly escaped the governor of Africa, father of Yūsuf, and reaching the western coast, succeeded in sending Bedr across the sea to tell the Umeiyad adherents of his arrival. These sent a ship for him, and he landed in Spain early in 138 A.H. With the help of the Yemenis, who rallied enthusiastically round him, he entered in triumph the palace of Cordova. The whole Peninsula was against the 'Abbāsids. As Syrians they favoured the Umeiyads. The Khawārij, a numerous faction, who would have preferred an 'Alid to the 'Abbasid branch of the Hāshimi house, made no opposition. And so the Spanish nation, weary of discord, after several ineffectual risings, fell under the unquestioned sway of 'Abd ar-Rahman. The Caliph of Bagdad, indeed, once and again sought to gain a footing by his emissaries. Failing in his endeavours, he sent an embassy to King Pepin, which, after remaining several years at the Gallic court, came back with a deputation from the Franks. These eventually returned to Europe laden with rich Oriental gifts. Nothing, however, came of the negotiation, excepting, perhaps, that apprehension of attack from the Christian monarch may have forestalled any hostile intention of 'Abd ar-Rahman against the Caliph of Bagdad. The 'Abbasid suffered the Umeiyad to remain in peace; and so Spain henceforward falls altogether out of view.

A.H. 136-158.

Lands in Spain, iii. 138 A.H. Sept., 755 A.D.

Umeiyad Caliphate in Spain.

Africa, though for a time, unlike Spain, independent neither in name nor in fact, was for the greater part of this reign almost equally out of hand. Both Berbers and Arabs, leaning towards the Khariji heresy, disowned the 'Abbasid succession. Over and again generals were sent to fight against them, but with little success. Among these was Aghlab, father of the founder of the dynasty of that name; he was killed near Tunis, where his grave was honoured as a martyr's. Kairawan was repeatedly taken and retaken. Rebellion ruled till near the close of his reign, when the Caliph, now relieved of his other adversaries, was able to send a great army which for the time restored 'Abbasid authority over the entire country.

Africa.

155 A.H.

A.H. 136-158.

There were troubles also at different times elsewhere, but not such as seriously to threaten the Empire. In

Armenia, 145 A.H.

Armenia, the Khazar hordes issuing from their passes, made great havoc, and carried away multitudes of men and women as prisoners. An army sent to punish them was cut to pieces; Tiflis was taken, and Armenia remained

Rising at Herat, 150 A.H.,

long in revolt. In the East, a serious rebellion was led by the ruler of Herāt, Ustadh Sis, who set up as a prophet and, followed by an immense army, possessed himself of great part of Khorasan and Sijistan. Beating the Imperial troops, he carried everything before him, till he was overcome by the tactics of Ibn Khazima who, after great slaughter in the field, put 14,000 prisoners to the sword.[1] The rebel fled; but afterwards gave himself up, and with the remainder of his followers was spared. It is said that it was a daughter of this chief who became the mother of the Caliph Al-Ma'mūn.[2]

and Mosul, 148 A.H.

Another rising took place, about the middle of this reign, in the country round about Mosul. It caused the greater alarm, because a strong Shi'ite feeling prevailed in Hamadan, from whence the revolt was led. The rebels, supported by the Kurds, spread over Persia and reached as far as Sind. They were eventually put down; but Al-Mansur was so incensed against Mosul that he thought of utterly demolishing it; and was only dissuaded by the advice of the great doctor Abu Hanifa, who declared the project opposed to the law of Islām.[3]

Khalid the Barmeki governor of Mosul.

The riots in Mosul led to Khālid the Barmeki being promoted to the command of that city, with which is connected a curious episode. For some cause, the Caliph had demanded of him a penalty of three millions, to be made good in three days (so the tale runs) on pain of his life. His son Yahya begged all round of his friends, but on the third day there was still short a tenth of the sum, when fortunately the alarming news from Mosul led to the

[1] The numbers are no doubt exaggerated. The rebel's army is put at 300,000, of whom 70,000 fell in the battle, besides the prisoners slain.

[2] Ibn al-Athīr, v. 452; but Ṭabari does not say so.

[3] The opinion is not embodied in very edifying language. It is to the effect that a woman who has gone astray is not on that ground open to outrage; neither was Mosul. Abu Hanifa died two years later.

choice of Khālid for the post. The Caliph started with him at once, as if for Ar-Raḳḳa on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem; then turning suddenly north, he arrived at Mosul unexpected, and so taking the Governor unawares, deposed him and installed Khālid in his room. Khālid's administration, severe, but tempered with kindness, was much appreciated, and he remained there till the Caliph's death. His son, Yaḥya, at the same time was appointed to Azerbījān. At Ar-Reiy there was born to Yaḥya a son named Al-Faḍl, simultaneously with Al-Mehdi's son Harun, whose foster-brother he was.[1] A.H. 136-158.

A romantic tale of the early life of Al-Manṣūr, while a refugee at Mosul, illustrates at once his character and the manners of the age. While in concealment in the city he married an Arab maiden. Leaving her with child, he gave her a document which he bade her present at Court whenever the family should come to power. In due time, the lady's son, Ja'far by name, went to Bagdad, and became secretary to Abu Eiyub, the Wazīr. In that capacity he served the Caliph as a scribe, who took a liking for him, found out his history, and saw the note he had left with his mother. Accordingly he despatched the youth to Mosul, bidding him bring his mother to Bagdad. But Abu Eiyub, who was now jealous of the favourite, sent men to assassinate him on the road. Days passed, and getting no tidings, the Caliph set on foot a search for Ja'far. The facts transpired; and the crime brought home to the Wazir, he was not only put to the death he deserved, but the same fate was meted out to his brother and nephews, who were also executed with barbarous cruelty.[2] Abu Ja'far's son at Mosul.

Wazīr put to death for his murder, 153-154 A.H.

The last few years of the Caliph's reign were free from anxiety, domestic or foreign. In a raid on Laodicæa, 6000 Asia Minor, 158 A.H.

[1] The demand from a faithful servant of three millions on pain of death, seems almost incredible; but it is chronicled without any expression of surprise, nor is any imputation of embezzlement mentioned. It is curious that Ibn al-Athīr repeats the incident under the year 158 A.H., just before the Caliph's death; but no doubt the earlier date is the right one.

[2] Their hands and feet were cut off while still alive. It is possible, but not so stated, that they also may have been implicated in the crime.

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women and children were taken captive. Shortly after, the Emperor asked for peace and submitted to the payment of a yearly tribute.

Illness and pilgrimage of Caliph, 158 A.H.

Towards the close of 158 A.H., Al-Manṣūr, who had already gone several times on pilgrimage, prepared to assist at the annual ceremonial. On the road to Al-Kufa, he fell sick, and rested in a castle by the way with his son Al Mehdi, to whom, apprehending that his end was near, he gave much wholesome advice on the obligations that would devolve upon him. He warned him against allowing Baghdad to spread on the eastern bank; bade him return to their owners various properties he had unjustly confiscated. "It will make thee liked," he said, "and will strengthen thy hands: and see," he added, "that thou make much of the men of Khorasan, for they verily have expended their lives and means on our behalf." After several days thus passed he bade his son a sorrowful farewell, and proceeded onwards. As he journeyed, the illness increased, and he said to his servants: "Haste thee with thy master, who now flieth from his sins, unto the sacred territory of his Lord!" While yet three miles from Mecca he died in his camp, and was buried in the Holy City.[1] He reigned nearly twenty-two years, and was aged about sixty-five. He had issue by three wives: and also by three slave-girls, of whom one was a Kurd, and one a Greek.

His death; end of 158 A.H. Oct., 775 A.D.

Character of Manṣūr.

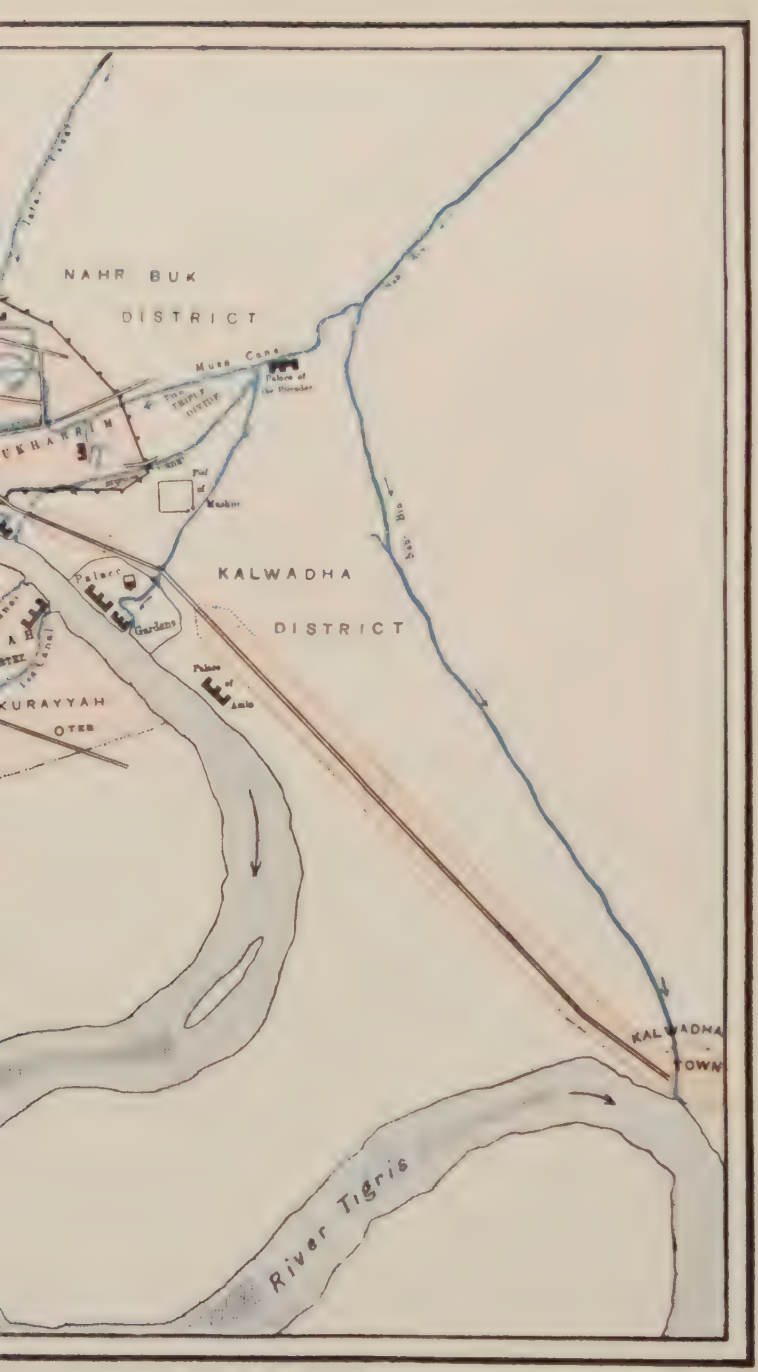
If we could forget his perfidy in compassing the death of such as he feared and hated, our estimate of Al-Manṣūr would be very different. As a Muslim, his life was religious and exemplary. Nothing profane or unseemly was ever seen at his Court. He was diligent in the business of the State, to which he devoted the first part of every day: the afternoon he spent with his family: and again, after evening prayer, he heard the despatches of the day and took counsel with his ministers, retiring late to rest and rising with the dayspring for morning prayer. The army was fitted throughout with improved weapons and armour; and the minister employed in this department relates that he was worked so hard by the Caliph that, though he began with

[1] One hundred graves were dug about the city; but he was buried in another, that no enemy might know and desecrate the spot.

BAGHDAD

between
150 and 300 A.H.

Scale of Engl. Mile



[To face page 464.

A.H. 135-158.

not a white hair in his head, in nine months he had not a black one left. His hand was light, yet firm, upon his governors, and the administration consequently good. But he was parsimonious, and hoarded the revenues to such an extent that, as he told Al-Mehdi, he had amassed treasure sufficient for ten years' expenditure. With all his good qualities, nevertheless, the verdict must be against Al-Manṣūr as a treacherous and cruel man. His victims, it is true, did not approach in numbers those of As-Saffāḥ; but he was not less unscrupulous than he in taking life wherever personal interests were concerned, and even exceeded him, though on comparatively rare occasions, in refinement of perfidy and heartless cruelty.

Influence of Persia; political, social, and literary.

During this reign the East began to exercise a marked effect on the manners and habits of the West. Persian costume, with the tall Zoroastrian hat,[1] became the fashionable dress at Court. Scholars from the East held high and influential place. Magians came over in large numbers to the faith, and brought with them the learning and philosophy at once of Indian and of Persian lands. The Arabs lost their pre-eminence not only in the Army and at Court, but in society at large. Hitherto the dominant caste, looking down with contempt on nations every way their superiors in science, art, and culture—they were now fast sinking to a lower level. As already observed, tradition, no longer oral, began to be embodied by the great doctors of the law in elaborate systems of jurisprudence adapted to the expanding range of Islam, and the necessities of an advancing civilisation.[2] Literature, History, Medicine, and especially Astronomy (for Al-Manṣūr was given to astrology) began to be studied.

The foundations were thus laid for the development of

[1] Ḳalansuwa.

[2] Two of the four great founders of the recognised systems of law, Abu Ḥanifa and Malik ibn Anas, flourished in this reign. Neither was much esteemed at Court; the latter, as we have seen, supported the claims of Ibrahim at Al-Baṣra; and the former having declined to be Ḳāḍi or judge of the new capital, Bagdad, which office the Caliph desired him to hold at its foundation, accepted instead the humbler charge of looking after the bricks and buildings there. The popular tradition is that he ended his life in prison for his refusal to be Ḳāḍi.

A.H. 136-158. intellectual life in subsequent reigns. And all this is mainly due to the encouragement given to the people of Khorasan and Persia, as well as in some degree also to the more liberal intercourse now growing up with the Grecian Empire in the present reign.[1]

[1] On the Caliphate of Al-Manṣūr see Nöldeke, *Sketches of Eastern History*, p. 107 ff.

CHAPTER LXIII

AL-MEHDI, SON OF AL-MANṢŪR

158-169 A.H. 775-785 A.D.

THE ten years' reign of Al-Mehdi, who immediately succeeded his father Al-Manṣūr, is mainly noticeable as a mean between the rough and vigorous rule of the first 'Abbasids, and the palmy days which followed—a kind of preparation, as it were. Al-Mehdi was by nature mild and generous. He inaugurated his accession by opening the prison doors to all but the worst and most dangerous class of felons. The treasure accumulated by his father gave ample means for profuse liberality. He enlarged and beautified the Mosques of the Holy Cities, and of the capital towns elsewhere.[1] The pilgrim caravanserais, provided now with fountains and establishments, were made commodious and secure. The postal service, accelerated on mules and camels, was greatly developed. Imperial agents,[2] located at the provincial centres, kept the Court informed of the progress of public affairs, which throughout the Empire were administered, upon the whole, with justice and moderation. Cities were put in good defence; and especially Ar-Ruṣafa, the eastern suburb of Bagdad. The Capital became already an emporium of trade with all parts of the world. Music, poetry, literature, and philosophy refined the age; while the example of the Court, both as to wine and the fair sex, tended to laxity of manners. Princely progresses were repeatedly made by Al-Mehdi with his Court to Jerusalem and the Holy Cities, the cavalcade being supplied with ice

Mehdi, 158 A.H. 775 A.D.

Favourable reign.

Growing laxity of manners.

Pilgrimages.

[1] Ibn al-Athīr (630 A.H.) tells us that he saw in the court of the Mosque of Mosul a slab with an inscription ascribing its extension to Al-Mehdi.

[2] Such an officer is called an *amīn*.

A.H. 158-160. from the mountains, all the way to Mecca. There he clothed the poor and distributed among the citizens largesses of almost fabulous amount. The coverings of the Ka'ba sent yearly by the Caliphs had hitherto been left draped one over the other; and, being of rich brocade, they had latterly become so weighty as to endanger the edifice. These were now removed, and their place supplied by the single covering sent every year by Al-Mehdi—a precedent followed by succeeding Caliphs. He also repaired the waymarks, inns, and wells on the pilgrims' road. Five hundred *Ansar*, or citizens of Medina, now followed the Caliph, as an Imperial guard, to Bagdad, where lands were assigned for their support;—a wise measure, which if maintained might have checked the insolent and dangerous pretensions of the Turkish soldiery at Court; but the practice must have been given up, for we hear no more of these Medina men.

Guard of Medina men.

There was, however, another side to the administration of Al-Mehdi, marked occasionally by outbursts of hideous cruelty.[1] Early in his reign a dangerous rebellion was raised by one Yūsuf in Khorasan. He was taken prisoner, carried with his comrades, face backwards, on a camel, and thus brought into Ar-Rusafa. There the Caliph had the rebel's hands and feet cut off, and then he was, with all his fellows, decapitated. The case of Ya'kūb, his Wazir, is also illustrative of the life at Court. He had been previously arraigned as an adherent of the house of 'Ali, and as such imprisoned by Al-Mansur. Released by Al-Mehdi, he became his favourite, the boon companion of nightly revels, and minister of unbounded power throughout the Empire. His prosperity at last raised enemies, who poisoned the ear of the Caliph against him as if he were still devoted to the 'Alid faction. To test his loyalty, Al-Mehdi had recourse to stratagem. Invited to spend the evening in a beautiful garden, Ya'kub found the Caliph seated in the company of a slave-girl of surpassing charms. The minister was overpowered by the

Cruel treatment of a rebel, 160 A.H.,

and of his Wazir.

[1] Weil extenuates such barbarities by the prevailing contempt of life amongst Mohammadans of the day, and the consequent necessity for adding pains and penalties to simple death; also by the statute of the Kor'ān for punishing robbers with the loss of limb. But the extenuation is altogether inadequate. [The practice is forbidden in a traditional saying of the Prophet.]

enchanting scene. "Ah!" said the Caliph, "it is indeed a paradise of delights; and I will give all to thee, and this damsel with it, if thou wilt rid me of that 'Alid"—naming one he had doomed to death. Ya'ḳub embraced the offer with transport, and became at once the happy master of the fairy scene. The 'Alid was at once summoned to his fate; but he pleaded his case so warmly that Ya'ḳūb was softened, and bade him fly the place. The maiden, curtained close by, having heard it all, let the Caliph know. And so, when Ya'ḳub assured his master that he had carried out his wish, the truth came to light, and Ya'ḳūb was cast into a pitch-dark prison, where he remained so long that he lost his sight.[1] A.H. 158-169.

Another minister, who had faithfully attended Al-Mehdi throughout the campaigns in Khorāsān, incurred the resentment of a courtier named Ar-Rabī', who, finding no other ground of escape, accused his rival's son of being a Manichæan heretic. The Caliph called the son, and examining him on the Ḳor'an, found him ignorant of its contents, and thereupon judging the imputation proved, had him beheaded. The father was deposed, and Ar-Rabī' succeeded to his office. and of a minister's son.

Hatred of the *Zanādika*, or Manichæan sectaries, indeed, and their cruel persecution, is one of the chief traits of Al-Mehdi's life, and of his son Al-Hādi's short reign. During the stay of Al-Mehdi in Khorāsan, he had imbibed an intense abhorrence of their tenets, which not only contravened Islam, but loosened the bonds of social and domestic morals. Suspicion whispered into the Caliph's ready ear led often without trial to a fatal end. Thus a blind poet, ninety years of age, was arraigned by enemies, smarting under his satires, on charge of this heresy, and notwithstanding his poems being free of the taint, put to death. At Aleppo, on his way to Syria, Al-Mehdi had a gathering of Manichæans hunted out from all that neighbourhood. Persecution of Manichæans.

[1] Ya'ḳūb relates that after he had remained in utter darkness, he knew not how many years, he was summoned to the presence, and desired to make obeisance to the Caliph, who asked, "Knowest thou who I am?" "Surely it is Al-Mehdi," he replied. "Ah," said the Caliph, "he has long ago been dead." "Then Al-Hadi." "He too is dead." "Then Hārūn." "That I am," answered the Caliph, who thereupon granted his request of permission to retire to Mecca.

A.H. 158-169.

Inquisition, 167 A.H.

They were all beheaded, and their bodies cut in pieces. Thereafter he established a department of State with a minister (*Sahib al-Zanadika*) whose duty it was to put down the heresy,—a kind of inquisition; and accordingly we read in the following year of "a great multitude" being apprehended as heretics and put to death.

Mokanna' claims divine honours in Central Asia, 158-161 A.H.

Another strange but ephemeral heresy gave trouble beyond the Oxus. It was led by a fanatic, who, from masking his ill-favoured countenance was called *Al-Mukanna'*, "the Veiled" prophet of Khorassan of Moore's *Lalla Rookh*. He taught the immanence of the Deity in Adam, in Abu Muslim, and lastly in himself. Vast multitudes of Turks, as well as Muslims, followed and worshipped him as god. For four years, in Bokhara and surrounding provinces, they beat back column after column of the Muslim troops. At last fortune turned against the impostor, who, deserted by the rest, found refuge with 2000 of his followers in a fort. Then reduced to straits, he either poisoned himself and his family, or set fire to the place, and calling on his women and all who would ascend heavenward with him, to follow his example, cast himself with them into the flames, and perished. The report of this scene gave fresh impulse to the sect, and though practised secretly, long time passed before it died out in the East.

War in Asia Minor, 159-162 A.H. 775-778 A.D.

War was waged with Greece throughout the greater part of the reign. Inroads into Asia Minor as far as Ancyra, led to reprisals by Michael,[1] who ravaged the Syrian border and inflicted a serious defeat on the Muslim arms. To avenge the injury, Al-Mehdi marshalled an army of 100,000 men, and with it crossed the Euphrates to Aleppo. Thence he sent forward in command his son Harun, though hardly yet twenty years of age; who, accompanied by Khalid the Barmeki as guardian, and supported by able generals, made a victorious march along the coast as far as the Bosphorus. There the regent, Queen Irene, was obliged, on payment of heavy ransom, to conclude a peace, and, moreover, to provide for the safe

Campaign of Harun to the Bosphorus, 156 A.H.

[1] Lachanodrakon. It is illustrative of the Caliph's arbitrary rule that on one of the generals retiring before Michael's superior force (164 A.H.), he was on the point of punishing him by death: but on the intercession of his friends cast him instead into prison.

return to the frontier of Hārūn, who had got entangled in defiles. The spoil was immense, and the number slain incredible.[1] It is interesting to note that in the early part of this reign, a descent from Africa made with the object of restoring Spain to the Caliphate ended in disaster; and that, on the other hand, the "Ruler" of Spain[2] had in preparation an expedition against the 'Abbāsids in Syria, which he was hindered from carrying out by troubles at home. A.H. 158-169. Spain, 161-163 A.H.

There were expeditions in other quarters, but none requiring notice, excepting perhaps that to India, which stormed the city of Barbad, and burned the image of the Buddha with a company of its worshippers. But the end was disastrous: the army lost 1000 men by a "mouth disease," and the fleet was wrecked by a storm on the Persian shore. India, 160 A.H.

Shortly after his accession, Al-Mehdi gave her freedom to Kheizurān, the mother of his sons Mūsa and Hārūn, whose influence over him even in affairs of state was great, and then married her. The unfortunate 'Īsa, whom Al-Manṣūr had forced to postpone his claim to that of Al-Mehdi, was now compelled altogether to relinquish his title to the throne,—a claim which he had now held for three-and-twenty years; and Mūsa, now surnamed *Al-Hādi* (the Guide), was proclaimed heir-apparent. With Hārūn, the younger son, his father was so pleased after the expedition to the Bosphorus, that he placed him, though still quite a youth, in charge of all the Western provinces including Azerbijan, and two years later proclaimed him, under the title of *Rashīd* (the Upright[3]), second in succession. But Hārūn was so much the favourite of his mother, and was also so preferred by his father, that he went a step further, and a year or two after called on Al-Hādi to waive his claim of precedence in his brother's favour. Al-Hadi, at the time prosecuting a campaign in Jurjan, naturally resisted the demand, and treated contumeliously a second messenger summoning him to Bagdad. Al-Mehdi thereupon, accompanied by Hārun, set out with an army to reduce his con- Mehdi marries Kheizurān, 159 A.H. Hādi heir-apparent, 160 A.H., and Hārūn, 166 A.H.

[1] 54,000 Greeks slain; 5000 taken prisoners, of whom 2090 were "executed in cold blood"; 20,000 cattle driven off, and 100,000 slain.

[2] He is called simply the Umeiyad *Ṣāḥib* (ruler) of Spain.

[3] Or "rightly directed." Pronounced Hārūn ar-Rashīd.

A.H. 158-169.

Mehdi's death, 22 i. 169 A.H. Aug. 4, 785 A.D.

tumacious son, but died on the way from eating a poisoned pear intended by one of his slave-girls for a favoured rival.[1] He was buried on the spot, aged forty-three, in the beginning of the year 169 A.H., Harun performing the service over the bier.

Character of Mehdi.

Attachment to Kheizurān and a favourite daughter.

Little more need be said of the character of Al-Mehdi. His administration was upon the whole such as to promote the welfare of the Nation, and usher in the brilliant era that followed; but his life was stained by many acts of tyranny and cruelty, nor was it altogether even in private such as a rigid Mohammadan would approve. Naturally soft and amiable, he maintained unabated to the end his attachment to Kheizurān. It is also told of him that he so doted on his young daughter Yākuta ["the Ruby"], that he could not let her out of his sight even when in public; and so, dressed in male attire, she used to ride out by his side. He was disconsolate when she died a year before him; but in the end was comforted by the condolence of his friends.

[1] Another account is that out hunting his horse reared after the hounds and game into a ruin, and that, struck by the lintel, he was killed. But this is hardly consistent with the mystery that gloomily surrounded his death, of which the army accompanying him only knew on their return to Bagdad.

CHAPTER LXIV

AL-HĀDI AND HĀRŪN AR-RASHID

169-193 A.H. 785-809 A.D.

Hādi 169 A.H. 785 A.D.

HĀRŪN wisely recognised the succession of his brother Al-Hadi, and at once despatched to him in Jurjān the imperial seal and sceptre. The army that had accompanied his father was dismissed to Bagdad, where it broke out into mutiny, stormed the Wazīr's house, and demanded largess. Kheizurān summoned the Wazīr and Yahya son of Khālid the Barmeki; but the latter, knowing Al-Hadi's jealousy of his mother, took upon him, without waiting on her, to satisfy the troops by a two years' grant. The Wazīr, who obeyed her call, nearly forfeited his life for doing so; but by the offer of large gifts regained the Caliph's favour.

'Alid rising at Medīna.

In the short reign of Al-Hadi few events occur of interest outside the Capital. There was a Khariji rising in Mesopotamia; and also an 'Alid, in Mecca and Medina. Strange to say, this last arose from the intemperance of some members of the saintly house of 'Ali, who for drinking wine were paraded with halters about their necks in the streets of the Holy Cities. The family thereupon broke out into rebellion, and some hard fighting was needed before peace could be restored. Among those who escaped was Idrīs, a brother of the Pure Soul and the Slain of Bakhamra. Aided by postal relays, he made his escape from the battlefield of Fakh near Mecca, through Egypt to Tangier, where he was welcomed by the Berbers, and laid the foundation of the Idrīsid dynasty. The postmaster of Egypt was beheaded for having connived at his flight.[1]

Idrīs escapes to Africa.

[1] Some authorities lay this at the door of Hārūn, and Weil charges it against that Caliph as one of his cruel acts.

A.H. 169-193.

Though Al-Hadi resembled his father in most things, in one he differed, for he would not allow Khaizurán to have any hand in the affairs of State. Accustomed as that lady had been to crowds of suitors seeking influence with her husband, when she attempted the like with her son, he bade her mind her own concerns, withdrew her escort and forbade the courtiers to wait upon her.[1] The proud woman smarted under the insult, and watched the opportunity for revenge.

Hadi resents interference of Khaizurán.

In his treatment of the Manichæans, Al-Hadi followed too closely at once the counsel and example of his father. Strange to say, there were amongst these heretics several of Hashimi descent, whom Al-Mehdi, having sworn never to take the life of any of his own house, left to his son with the fatal injunction to put them all to death. How this pestilent heresy found adherents among the faithful of Arabia and Al-'Irak, is difficult to understand, and one may hope that of many sins laid to their charge, they were falsely accused.[2] Shortly before his death Al-Mehdi declared that he would destroy the whole brood of the Zanádika, root and branch; and he is said to have ordered a thousand palm-stakes to be erected, on which as many heretics should be impaled,—a report, the existence of which shows at any-rate the prevailing belief in the intensity of his hatred towards the sect.

His cruel treatment of heretics.

Following his father also in another respect, Al-Hádi formed the project of setting his brother aside, and proclaiming his young son heir-apparent. He was supported by all the court, excepting Yahya the Barmeki, who succeeded once and again in dissuading him from so precipitate and unwise a step. Harun, now treated with indignity, retired into private life. At last, after much vacillation, the Caliph, at the instigation of the creatures around him, who were forward to take the oath, proclaimed his son successor, and cast Yahya into prison. Al-Hadi was just then at his country seat near Mosul; and there he fell

Hadi endeavours to supersede Harun.

[1] He is even said to have attempted to poison her, but the imputation is doubtful. Weil thinks it was fabricated to justify the Queen Mother's unnatural conduct towards Al-Hādi.

[2] Thus the daughter of one of these condemned Hashimites is said to have confessed that she was with child by her own father, and when carried before the Caliph died of fright.

sick and died. His end is obscure. The ordinary version is that when he sickened, his mother induced certain of his slave-girls to smother him. We are told further that she had despatches in readiness for the various governors to recognise the succession of Harūn, which would imply complicity of some kind in the death of Al-Hadi. We hear little more of her; and she herself died shortly after. A.H. 169-193. His death.

Under Al-Hādi and the two following Caliphs Persian influence and fashion reached their height. The new year and other festivals were observed, and Persian dress and hats began to be worn and continued for several reigns. The tendency to exalt the non-Arabs at the expense of the Arabs took formal shape in the movement of the Shu'ūbiya or Nationalism, which aimed at the exaltation of the subject nations, and especially the Persians. Its members claimed that the Persians, it might be, or Greeks, were in every way superior to the Arabs, both in arts and sciences, and even in what these claimed as specially their own, the study of genealogies and the practice of the virtues of the desert.[1]

On his brother's death, Hārūn, now nearly twenty-five years of age, emerging from his retirement, hastened to the Court, performed the funeral obsequies, and was saluted Caliph without opposition. Al-Hādi's young son was easily persuaded to drop his claim; but a circumstance connected with it showed thus early that Hārūn, though called *Rashīd*, was as prone to vindictive cruelty, if moved to hate or jealousy, as any of his predecessors. When some time before, Harun was about to cross the Tigris, the courtier in charge of Al-Hadi's son called out from the other side of the bridge to "stay until the heir-apparent had passed over"; and Harūn answered angrily:—"The Amir's humble servant!" The incident rankled in his breast, and on his accession he had the unlucky courtier put to death. Hārūn succeeds, 170 A.H. 786 A.D. Instance of capricious cruelty.

On the day of accession, his son Al-Ma'mun was born, and Al-Amin some little time later:—the latter, as son of Zubeida granddaughter of Al-Mansur, taking precedence over the former, whose mother was a Persian slave-girl. As the new Caliph crossed the bridge re-entering Bagdad, he bade divers to search in the river for the "Mountain," a famous ring worth 100,000 golden pieces, given to him by Recovers his ring in the Tigris.

[1] Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, i., pp. 147 ff.

A.H. 169-193. his father. On Al-Hadi's demanding this ring, he had some time before flung it into the Tigris; and now as he pointed out the spot, it was discovered by the divers, to his great delight.

The Barmekis. Yahya the Barmeki, whom Al-Hadi had imprisoned and threatened with death, was now brought to Court and installed as Wazir. His two sons, Al-Fadl and Jafar, also exercised unbounded power;—the former, foster-brother of the Caliph, and a statesman of unrivalled ability;[1] the latter, the favourite of Harun and boon companion of his privacy. These were the three leading men of the Barmeki house, the fall of which, seventeen years later, has left an indelible stigma on the Caliph's name.

Harūn's religious life. Harun is noted for his careful observance of the ritual of Islam: daily he performed one hundred prostrations, and distributed 1000 dirhems in alms. In the first year of his reign he performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, and repeated it afterwards some nine different times. On every occasion he scattered munificent largesses amongst the people, and

Magnificent court. carried in his train crowds of indigent pilgrims. He was surrounded also by a magnificent court, both when on pilgrimage and on other journeys, and by a host of learned men, doctors of the law, poets, and philosophers; and it is in part these princely progresses that have shed so great a lustre on this reign.

Wise, and, on the whole, just. Harun was perhaps the ablest ruler of the 'Abbasid race. He is likened to Al-Mansur, but without his parsimony. If we except some flagrant instances of tyrannous cruelty, his government was wise and just; as without doubt, it was grand and prosperous. Bold and active in his habits, he followed up his early campaign against the Greeks, by

Dislikes Bagdad, and retires to Rakka. repeatedly himself again appearing in the field. Eight or nine years after his accession, he forsook Bagdad and set up his court at Ar-Rakka, in the north of Syria. This he did ostensibly to hold disloyal Syria in check, in spite (as he would say) of his loving Bagdad better than any other place in the whole world. But it seems likelier that he had contracted an aversion towards Bagdad, for he never again resided there, and seldom even visited it.

[1] See above, p. 463. The two mothers suckled each other's babes. The relation of foster-mother is much esteemed in the East.

A.H. 169-193.

In the second year of this reign, a serious rising under a Khāriji leader stirred the whole province of Mosul into insurrection. Abu Hureira, the governor of Mesopotamia, was discomfited by the rebel, who gained possession of the city. Fresh troops were despatched, and in the end peace was restored. But the Caliph was so displeased with the failure of Abu Hureira, that he was in consequence brought to Bagdad, and there put to death.

Rising at Mosul, 171 A.H.

Death of Abu Hureira.

Asia Minor.

The security of the Syrian frontier was the early care of Hārūn, both on the side of Armenia threatened by the Khazar hordes, and of Asia Minor threatened by the Greeks. One of his first acts was to create a new charge towards the west, under a Turkish general,[1] with Tarsus as its strongly fortified headquarters. War was waged almost every year with the Greeks, and Hārūn over and again either joined his forces, or watched their progress on the frontier, for which his residence at Ar-Rakka gave him easy opportunity. The Muslims also began to be successful at sea; Crete and Cyprus were attacked and the Greek admiral taken prisoner.[2] In the raids on the frontier, a multitude of captives and vast booty were secured. But fortune varied; there were serious reverses, and on one occasion, severe loss and suffering from cold in the passes. In 181 A.H., Hārūn headed a large force in person, and, Constantinople being distracted at home, great victories were achieved as far as Ephesus and Ancyra. Prisoners were thereafter exchanged; 4000 Muslims were recovered amid great rejoicings; and Irene, on payment of tribute, obtained a four years' truce. An advance was subsequently made by Al-Kāsim, the Caliph's third son, but withdrawn on the Greeks sending in several hundred prisoners. A sudden irruption of the Khazar into Armenia was with difficulty repelled.

Created separate government, 170 A.H.

Naval operations, 175 A.H.

Hārūn takes the field, 181 A.H.

Irene tributary, 186 A.H.

Soon after, Nicephorus having succeeded to the throne is said to have sent this insulting epistle to the Caliph:—"From Nicephorus, king of the Greeks, to Hārūn, king of the Arabs.

[1] The first notice of a Turkish chief placed in a military command. We shall soon find them coming to the front in all departments, and especially at the head of the Muslim armies.

[2] This from Greek authorities, who state that on refusing to embrace Islām, Hārūn had him beheaded. Muslim writers do not mention him.

A.H. 169-193.

Irene hath parted with the castle, and contented herself with the pawn. She had paid three moneys, the double of which thou shouldest have paid to her. It was but a woman's weakness. Wherefore, return what thou hast taken, or the sword shall decide."

Insulting letter of Nicephorus, 187 A.H. 803 A.D.

Hārūn's reply.

Hārūn reading the letter, fell into a rage, and calling for pen and ink wrote on the back of the letter:—"From Hārūn, Commander of the Faithful, to Nicephorus, dog of the Greeks. I have read thy letter, son of an unbelieving mother. The answer is for thine eye to see, not for thine ear to hear." And Hārūn was as good as his word; at once he started and ravaged the land as far as Heraclea, before the Emperor, hampered by rebels, had stirred a step; and so an ignominious peace, and renewed tribute, were the end of such foolish boasting. Over and again when Hārūn was engaged elsewhere, Nicephorus broke his treaty, and as often was beaten. At last, near the close of his reign, the Caliph marched again with 135,000 men, took possession of Heraclea and Tyana, and besides tribute, reduced Nicephorus to the contempt of a personal impost on himself and on each member of the Imperial house. Cyprus was anew overrun; 16,000 prisoners carried off to Syria; and for the ransom of its Bishop alone, 2000 golden pieces had to be paid. But in the following year the Greeks once more advanced, and inflicted severe loss on the enemy both at Mar'ash and Tarsus, which Hārūn, having trouble elsewhere on his hands, was not in a position to retrieve. The end of it all,—the bitter end of all such wars,—was to inflame religious hate. The Caliph caused all churches in the border-lands to be cast down, and the obnoxious distinctions of dress and equipage to be enforced with the utmost rigour upon the Christian population.

Disasters of Nicephorus, 190 A.H. 806 A.D.

191 A.H.

Africa: opposition of native tribes, 178-181 A.H.

Africa continued further and further to drift from 'Abbāsid control. After various fortune of victory and defeat, Harthama, an able general, was despatched with a large force, and succeeded in beating down opposition; but a short experience convinced him that hostile interests throughout the land were so inveterate as to leave little hope of eventual success; and, anxious now for the more attractive field of the East, he resigned. Thereafter the Aghlabid dynasty, though at first nominally subordinate

Harthama retires.

to Bagdad, became eventually independent at Kairawān; as already was the Idrīsid at Tangier in the farther West. A.H. 169-193.

In 176 A.H., the ancient Syrian jealousies between the two Arab stocks of the North and South broke out into open feud, and kept Damascus for two years in continual ferment; a state of things, however, which gave the Caliph little concern, as it simply weakened the power of the disloyal Syrians. Ten years afterwards they began again to fight against each other; but this time Hārūn interfered to compose their differences. Somewhat later Mosul was the scene of a rebellion, which lasted two years, until Hārun himself took possession of the city, razed its walls, and was again with difficulty dissuaded from destroying it altogether. A still more alarming outbreak occurred at Naṣibin under a Khariji leader, Al-Welīd ibn Ṭarif, who, after ravaging Armenia and Azerbijān, descended on Mesopotamia, and crossing the Tigris to Holwān held the whole province in terror. In the end he was defeated and slain. This campaign is notable for the beautiful elegy of Leila on the death of her brother the rebel,—to avenge which she had ridden forth disguised in armour, but retired in maidenly confusion on being recognised by the general of the Caliph's army. Hārūn was so alarmed at the near approach of this danger, that to commemorate the victory, he performed in thanksgiving both the Lesser and the Greater pilgrimage, visiting on foot the various Holy stations.[1]

Syria: tribal fighting, 176-177 A.H.

Mosul, 178-180 A.H.

Khāriji rising in Armenia and Holwān, 177 A.H.

Passing over various outbreaks on the outskirts of the Empire, there is one of these in the north which deserves notice as illustrating the faithlessness of the Caliph. Yahya, another brother of the Pure Soul and of the Slain of Bakhamra, having gained possession of the Deilem, grew so mightily in power as to extend his kingdom to the borders of the Caspian, and attract to his brilliant court followers from all parts of the world. Hārun, jealous at once of his influence and of his distinguished birth, sent Al-Faḍl the Barmeki, then governor of Persia and Jurjān, with a great army to oppose him. Yahya was drawn into an apparently friendly communication with Al-Faḍl, and agreed that he should submit

Treacherous dealing with the Ḥasani prince of Deilem, 176 A.H.

[1] Ibn al-Athīr under the year 178. Ṭab. does no more than mention Al-Welid's rebellion, iii. 631, 638.

A.H. 169-193.

to the Caliph a proposal for presenting himself at Bagdad under a covenant of honourable treatment, the bond to be witnessed not only by doctors of the law but by representatives of the Hashimi house. Hārūn, overjoyed at the prospect of being rid of his rival, confirmed the covenant with his own hand, and in due course received him with much distinction and princely gifts; but shortly after he allowed his jealousy to override his conscience. The chief Kadi was obsequious enough to discover a flaw in the document; but an equally distinguished doctor declared that the covenant made with a power backed by an army in the field, was indefeasible. Hārūn, nevertheless, supported by the former, cast Yahya into prison; and having called for the solemnly attested document, tore it into shreds.

Amin heir-apparent, 175 A.H.,

While yet but five years old, Harun's son by Zubeida, preferred in virtue of his noble birth, was nominated heir-apparent, under the title of Al-Amin. Some years later, his other son, 'Abdallah, several months older, was declared the next successor, both being now twelve years of age.

and Ma'mūn, 182 A.H.

The latter, surnamed Al-Ma'mūn,[1] was placed under the guardianship of Ja'far the Barmeki, and at an early age given charge of Khorasan and all the countries from Hamadan to farthest East.

Hārūn's arrangements at pilgrimage, 186 A.H. 802 A.D.

On a brilliant pilgrimage to Mecca, the Caliph presented each of these sons with the munificent gift of a million golden pieces, and caused two documents, witnessed by the chief ministers of state, to be hung up with solemn ceremony in the Ka'ba, inscribed, one in favour of Al-Amin the other of Al-Ma'mun. He also gave Mesopotamia and the Greek frontier in charge of Al-Kasim, his youngest son, who might, but only at the discretion of Al-Ma'mun, succeed to its eventual sovereignty.

189 A.H.

Further still, some years later, when on a journey to the East, he willed (a singular condition) that the army, with all its treasure and munitions of war, should fall to the lot of Al-Ma'mūn; and he caused oaths of allegiance to the three sons to be renewed both at Bagdad and throughout the Empire in accordance with these arrangements. People marvelled that so wise a ruler should so soon forget the lessons of the past, and from such strange provisions fore-

[1] One in whom faith is placed, "the Trusted": Al-Amin signifying "the Faithful"; grand epithets, if they had only been true.

boded evil in the future. It is not often that our annalists indulge in reflections such as these; but here we have the proverb applied by them to Hārūn, "Self-conceit makes a man both blind and deaf." A.H. 169-193. Hārūn's sons.

We now come to the startling narrative of the fall of the Barmekis. The course of this distinguished family has been already traced, from its rise in Balkh, through successive generations, to the highest posts of honour and influence in the State. Yaḥya, son of Khālid, now advanced in years, had resigned office into the hands of his sons Al-Faḍl and Ja'far. The former, possessed of boundless authority, and regarded by the people with love and esteem, was virtual ruler of the empire. The latter, more given to indulgence, was the constant companion of Hārūn's hours of pleasure and amusement; yet he also must have inherited the ability of the house, having had charge of the youthful Al-Ma'mūn with the whole government of the East, and though only thirty-seven years of age, had held the office of Wazīr for seventeen years. Poets were never weary of extolling the Barmekīs, nor historians of narrating their virtues, munificence, and power. Suddenly Ja'far was put to death, and the family disappears from the scene. The cause assigned was this:— Fall of the Barmekīs.

Ja'far, as said above, was the boon companion of the Caliph, who loved to have his sister 'Abbasa also with him at times of recreation and carousal. But Muslim etiquette forbade their common presence; and, to allow of this, Hārun had the marriage ceremony performed between them, on the understanding that it was purely nominal. But the ban was too weak for 'Abbasa. A child given secret birth was sent by her to Mecca; while a maid, quarrelling with her mistress, made known the scandal. Harun when on pilgrimage ascertained that the tale was but too true. On his return to Ar-Rakka, shortly after, he sent a eunuch to slay Ja'far, whose body was despatched to Bagdad, and there, divided in two, impaled on either side of the bridge. It continued so for three years, when Harun, happening to pass through Bagdad from the East, gave command for the miserable remains to be taken down and burned. On the death of Ja'far, his father and brother were both cast into prison at Ar-Rakka, and orders passed all over the empire to confiscate the property of any member Story of Ja'far's disgrace, and death, 187 A.H.,

A.H. 169-193.

and fall of whole Barmeki family.

of the family, wherever found. Both Yahya, an aged and now heart-broken man, and Al-Fadl, yet young but paralysed from the shock, died in confinement shortly before Harun himself. Men grieved at their death; poets sang the praises of Al-Fadl, and annalists fill their pages with tales of his princely generosity, and laud his memory as one of the most distinguished of mankind. The grandeur, power, and popularity of the house, as well as the services it had rendered to the dynasty, both in the conduct of the Empire and upbringing of the minor princes, intensified the tragedy and the scandal before the public; and although other causes have been assigned, the fact of Ja'far's violent end leaves little doubt as to the general accuracy of the story given above. Harun himself kept a mysterious silence. Once questioned by his beautiful and accomplished sister 'Oleiya, he is said to have stayed her with these words:—"Life of my soul! if but my innermost garment knew of it, I would tear it into shreds."[1]

Another murder.

The painful episode was followed by the murder of Ibrāhim, a faithful friend of Ja'far, who mourned over his loss, and in private spoke bitterly of his miserable end. The Caliph hearing of this, invited him to a convivial bout alone, and having plied him with wine, pretended to mourn the loss of Ja'far, whom, he said, he would now willingly part with half his kingdom to have back again. Ibrāhim thus

[1] Weil has gone very fully into the question, and leaves little room to doubt the outline as a whole. The story is one eminently fitted to excite the Oriental imagination. Thus Ibn Khalliḳān, in his gossiping way, tells us that 'Abbāsa, conceiving an uncontrollable passion for her husband, persuaded his mother (who used to send a slave-girl every Friday night as her son's companion) to make use of her for once instead. She was sent accordingly in disguise, and Ja'far, under the influence of wine (nabīdh), discovered the deception but too late, and then was overcome by terror at the possible results. It may be a tale, but even so, it points to the popular belief, and the notices both in prose and verse are entirely in accord. Some authorities pass the matter by in silence, or (as Ibn Khaldūn) attribute it to other causes—as, escape of an 'Alid offender by Ja'far's connivance; his princely palace exciting Harun's jealousy; Yahya's entering the presence without authority; 'Alid tendency of the family, etc.; but all are inadequate for the execution of Ja'far and downfall of the family.

'Abbāsa and her child are also said to have been made away with, but this is doubted.

deceived, began in his cups to unbosom himself to the apparently repentant monarch, in praise of Ja'far and grief at his death. Whereupon Hārūn cast him out, cursing him as a traitor, and shortly after had him put to death. A.H. 169-193.

We turn with relief to notice what was passing on the outskirts of the Empire. The East was fast becoming firmly consolidated under the strong Turkish interest at court. There was, indeed, a serious rebellion under a Khāriji leader, who ravaged Persia and the outlying provinces as far as Herāt, but it was at last put down by the governor, 'Alī ibn 'Īsa. Some years after, the Caliph, hearing unfavourable reports of his lieutenant's tyranny, marched with Al-Ma'mūn to Ar-Reiy. There, to answer the charges against him, he summoned 'Alī, who by splendid gifts to the Caliph and to the court rendered his position again secure. Hārūn stayed four months at Ar-Reiy, which he loved as his birthplace, and there receiving duty in person from the native chiefs to the north — who still retained something of their ancient power under the suzerainty of the Caliphate — he settled the affairs of Ṭabaristān, the Deilem, and other provinces in that direction. He then returned by Bagdad to his court at Ar-Raḳḳa. Persia and Khorāsān, 180 A.H. Hārūn visits Reiy, 189 A.H.

Some little time later a serious rebellion arose in the East out of a strange origin. A wealthy lady in Samarḳand, whose husband had been long absent in Bagdad, bethought herself of another, and being told that it was the easiest way of dissolving the knot, abjured Islam and then married her suitor, one Rāfi' ibn Leith, a grandson of Naṣr ibn Seiyār. The first husband complained to the Caliph, who, scandalised at the affront on the Muslim faith, not only ordered that Rāfi' should divorce the lady, but be paraded on an ass and cast into prison. Thence, however, he effected his escape, and after wandering about the country, returned to Samarḳand, slew the governor, and raised the standard of rebellion. 'Alī ibn 'Īsa, alarmed lest Rāfi' should steal a march on Merv, quitted Balkh, and set out thither; on which, Rāfi' rapidly gained possession of all the country beyond the Oxus. Meanwhile reports again reached the Caliph of the tyranny and rapacity of 'Alī, and so, with the double view of superseding him, and subduing this rebellion, he sent Harthama, now returned from his African command, Rebellion of Rāfi' in Samarḳand, 190 A.H.

A.H. 169-193.

with a large force, and secret orders to assume the Government. Arrived at Merv, Harthama at first received 'Alī graciously, but shortly after, showing his patent of command, confiscated the vast wealth of the tyrant, and despatched it on 1500 camels to the avaricious Caliph. 'Alī himself, seated on a bare backed camel, was sent in disgrace to Ar-Rakka,—the common fate of rulers of the day.

Harthama supersedes 'Alī ibn 'Īsa, 192 A.H.

Harthama's campaign against Rāfi', 192-195 A.H.

Harthama lost no time in attacking Rāfi', and gaining the victory, besieged him in Samarkand; but it was several years before the rebellion was quelled. Meanwhile the Khawārij, taking advantage of the disturbances beyond the Oxus, raised the country to the south of that river, and threatened the eastern province of Persia. Things looked so serious that Harūn resolved himself on a progress thither, and towards the end of 192 A.H. set out from his residence at Ar-Rakka for the purpose. Leaving Al-Kāsim there to control Syria and the West, he journeyed to Bagdad, in charge of which he placed Al-Amīn. He would also have left Al-Ma'mūn behind; but Al-Ma'mūn, dreading lest his father, who had already sickened, should die by the way, in which event Al-Amīn might, with the help of his royal mother, depose him from the government of the East,—asked permission to join the army on the march, which, after some demur, Harūn granted. Travelling slowly over the mountain range into Persia, Harūn one day called his physician aside, and, alone under the shelter of a tree, unfolding a silken kerchief that girded his loins, disclosed the fatal disease he laboured under. "But have a care," he said, "that thou keep it secret: for my sons, (and he named them all and their guardians) are watching the hour of my decease, as thou mayest see by the shuffling steed they will now mount me on, adding thus to mine infirmity." There is something touching in these plaintive words of the great Monarch, now alone in the world, and bereft of the support even of those who were bound to rally round him in his hour of weakness. Early in the following year he reached Jurjān, where, becoming worse, he sent on Al-Ma'mūn with a portion of the army to Merv; and himself, journeying slowly, reached Tūs, where, despairing of life, he had his grave dug close by his dwelling-place. The brother of Rāfi' was brought in a prisoner when Harūn was near his end; "If I had no more

Hārūn himself takes the field, 192 A.H. 808 A.D.;

sickens on the way, ii. 193 A.H. End of 808 A.D.;

breath left," he said, "but to say a single word, it should be *Slay him*"; and so the dismembered wretch was slain before the dying monarch. Shortly after, he breathed his last, and one of his younger sons prayed over the bier. He was forty-seven years of age, and had reigned three-and-twenty. When nineteen, he married Zubeida of royal birth, who survived him over thirty years. He had seven wives, but only four were alive at his death. Besides Al-Amin, the son of Zubeida, there were ten sons and fourteen daughters, all the progeny of slave-girls.

A.H. 169-193.

dies, vi. 193 A.H. March, 809 A.D.

Though not mentioned by native chroniclers, Hārūn received an embassy from Charles the Great,—two Christians and a Jew, who sought that facilities might be afforded to the West for pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and also for the fostering of trade. They returned with splendid gifts, elephants, rare ornaments, and a water clock; but the effort was followed by no material result. An embassy was also sent by Hārūn to the Chinese emperor, no doubt to establish friendly relations with his rulers on the trans-Oxus border; but neither is this mentioned by the Muslim annalists.[1]

Embassy to Hārūn from Charles the Great.

Hārūn and his son Al-Ma'mūn, stand out in history as the greatest 'Abbasid monarchs. Hārūn might indeed have been ranked along with some of the best of the Umeiyad dynasty, had it not been for the dark spots of treacherous cruelty that stain his whole career.[2] Splendid in his courtly surroundings and princely in his liberality, he yet amassed vast treasures,—leaving 900 millions in his vault,—by oppressive and often unscrupulous means. His administration, with these exceptions, was just and prosperous. Accustomed from youth to martial life, he frequently joined his troops in the field; and his many victories, especially over the Greeks, have shed lustre on his reign. No Caliph, either before or after, displayed such energy and activity in his various progresses whether

Splendid reign.

[1] The Chinese writers call the Caliph *Galun*.

[2] Weil is excessively severe on Hārūn,—a singular exception to his usual calm and impartial judgment. He makes him out the greatest tyrant of his race, though he really was not so bad as many others both before and after. It is the Barmekid tragedy that has given him so unenviable a pre-eminence in Eastern story.

A.H. 169-193.

for pilgrimage, for administration, or for war. But what has chiefly made this Caliphate illustrious, is that it ushered in the era of letters. His Court was the centre to which, from all parts, flocked the wise and the learned, and at which rhetoric, poetry, history and law, as well as science, medicine, music, and the arts, met with a genial and princely reception,—all which bore ample fruit in the succeeding reigns.[1]

Even when shorn of its romance.

As with Solomon, the witchery of Oriental romance, as in the *Thousand and One Nights*, has cast an adventitious glow around the life of Hárún ar-Rashíd; but even when that has faded away before the prosaic realities of history, enough remains to excite wonder and admiration at the splendour of this monarch's Caliphate.

[1] Savants of every branch were entertained with princely liberality; but poets were the recipients of his special bounty. For example, Merwan ibn abi Hafṣa, having presented a qaṣída in his praise, he forthwith gave him a purse of 5000 golden pieces, a robe of honour, ten Greek slave-girls, and one of his own steeds to ride on.

CHAPTER LXV

AL-AMĪN AT BAGDAD; AL-MA'MŪN AT MERV

193-198 A.H. 808-813 A.D.

Breach between Amīn and Ma'mūn, 193 A.H. 809 A.D.

In his unwise division of the kingdom, Harūn left a fatal legacy that was not long in bearing bitter fruit. Al-Amīn, as occupying Bagdad, the seat of empire, had the advantage of Al-Ma'mun. In anticipation of his father's end, he had deputed an agent to the camp at Ṭūs, with letters to be kept hid until the event. Immediately on Hārūn's death, they were produced. In one Al-Ma'mūn, then at Merv, was bidden to have oaths of allegiance sworn to both the brothers, in accordance with their father's will. But a second, in direct contravention of that will, ordered the army with its munitions of war, to return at once to Bagdad. On hearing of this, Al-Ma'mūn sent messengers from Merv to expostulate against this violent breach of distinct conditions to which all had taken solemn oath; but the troops were already well on their way, hurrying too gladly homewards to heed the appeal. On their return to Bagdad, Al-Amīn signalised his accession by distributing a year's pay to the army, which he had thus against his father's covenant stolen away from Al-Ma'mūn.

Ma'mūn's administration in the East.

The relations between the brothers were thus from the first strained. Al-Ma'mun, guided by an able adviser, a converted Zoroastrian, Al-Faḍl ibn Sahl, temporised. This man, as a recent Persian convert and *protégé* of the Barmekids, was well fitted to secure a stable and popular rule throughout the East for Al-Ma'mun, who was now its rightful Sovereign. Under his guidance all classes were conciliated, both the Arabs settled tribally

A.H. 193-198.

in great numbers in and around Merv, and also the Turkish chiefs and princes, from whom a fourth of their tribute was now forgiven. Al-Ma'mūn's mother was of Persian blood, a fortunate relation that commended him to the affections of the people. "Son of our sister," they said, "he is one of ourselves, and an 'Abbasid to boot." As the breach with his brother widened, he assumed the title of Caliph, making Al-Fadl his Prime minister, both civil and military, whose rule ran from Hamadan to Thibet from the Caspian to the Persian Gulf.[1] Meanwhile peace was restored throughout Khorasan. Harthama after a long siege took Samarkand, and Rafi' hearing of Al-Ma'mūn's benign administration, threw himself on his mercy and was pardoned.

Ma'mūn Caliph of East, with Ibn Sa'il Prime minister, 196 A.H. 812 A.D.

Strained relations between Amīn and Ma'mūn.

Al-Amīn, on the other hand, was a weak voluptuary led at will by those about him. His Wazir was another Al-Fadl, Ibn ar-Rabi', who having been Chief minister with Harun at Tus, was party to what took place there upon his death. In consequence he dreaded the vengeance of Al-Ma'mūn should he ever come to power, and persuaded Al-Amīn to proclaim that his son's name should have precedence of Al-Ma'mūn's in the public prayers. Al-Ma'mūn retaliated by dropping from the weekly Service all mention of Al-Amīn, and by effectually closing every avenue of communication with Bagdad. At last Al-Amīn took the fatal step of declaring his brother altogether deposed from the succession, and his own son heir-apparent. Of a piece with this high-handed act, he sent to the Ka'ba for the two documents, solemnly suspended by his father within the sacred walls, and tore them in shreds. Surrounded by eunuchs and women, he passed his time in revelry and dissipation. Songstresses and slave-girls, gathered for their beauty from all parts of the empire and arrayed in splendid jewelry, were the chief society of himself and his boon companions. For his *fêtes* on the Tigris he had five gondolas, in the shapes of lion, elephant, eagle, serpent, and horse. Besides the private carousals in which he made no secret of drinking wine, his festivities were of the most sumptuous kind. For one of these he had the banquet-hall decked out with

Amīn deposes Ma'mūn, 194-195 A.H. 810 A.D.

His dissipated character.

[1] He was called *Dhu'r-Ri'asatein*, "Minister of the two departments," *i.e.*, both civil and military.

gorgeous carpets, couches, and trappings; a hundred songstresses sang in unison before him, then breaking into companies of ten, and with palm-branches in their hands, each group advanced in turn and sang before him. But on this occasion his wayward fancy took the songs as of evil omen, and he had the hall dismantled and destroyed. Such revels, with music, dancing, and wine, were peculiarly obnoxious to Muslim sentiment; and our annalist (who seldom indulges in any such comment) remarks —"We find of him no good thing to say." Still Al-Amīn was a favourite at Bagdad, a city already demoralised by a long course of sensuous living; and he was popular there, partly because of the money which he lavished on the troops and populace, and partly also because, while Al-Ma'mūn was dreaded for his Persian proclivities, Al-Amīn represented the Western sentiment that ruled in the Capital of Islām. A.H. 193-198.

Amīn's generals beaten by Ṭāhir, who advances on 'Irāḳ, 195 A.H. 811 A.D.

When Al-Amīn found that his unjust pretensions were ignored at Merv, he resolved on reducing Al-Ma'mūn by force of arms; but from beginning to end he was unfortunate in his commanders. The first was 'Alī ibn 'Īsa, hated in the East for his tyranny, and deposed, as we have seen, on that account with indignity by Hārun. He was now despatched with 50,000 men, and met with no opposition till he reached Ar-Reiy. There lay Ṭahir, posted by Al-Ma'mūn with a small force to watch the frontier, who disdaining to wait for reinforcement, gave battle at once. 'Alī was slain in single combat by a blow from Ṭahir's left hand, for he wielded arms equally well with both hands; and the Caliph's army fled.[1] This Ṭahir, of Persian descent, the wise and brave founder of the Ṭāhirid house, was well chosen for the attack which Al-Ma'mūn now ordered on Bagdad. On his march to Ḥolwan successive armies were sent by Al-Amīn against him, but he defeated them all. Harthama, despatched

[1] He was called "the Ambidexter," and had also lost an eye, as we shall see noticed below. The command of Ṭāhir illustrates the change now rapidly coming over society in the relative position of the Arab tribes towards the conquered nations. He was the great-grandson of a Persian slave belonging to an Arab chief of the Khozā'a clan, and, as his freedman, became a "client" of the clan itself. The proud Arab, of the dominant caste, had now sunk in the scale, and the descendant of the slave, or "client," thus risen above him.

A.H. 193-198.

with heavy reinforcements from Merv, was left in charge of Holwan by Tahir, who now advanced upon Al-Ahwaz and Sus, and from thence threatened the Capital itself.

Amin's evil courses.

Al-Fadl ibn ar-Rabi' sought to rouse Al-Amin to a sense of the crisis, but the voluptuous monarch, immersed in pleasure, gave a readier ear to the auspicious presages of the creatures around him, and to the fond counsels of his maidens and eunuchs. Chafing under repeated defeat, he confiscated the estate of Al-Ma'mun, including the million of pieces given him by his father. Some even advised him to put Al-Ma'mun's two sons left at Baghdad to death, but he had still the virtue left to frown on the proposal. Meanwhile a new danger threatened in Syria. A pretender, claiming in his person descent at once from the houses of 'Ali and of Mu'awiya,—sires that had contended for the Caliphate on the field of Siffin,—gained possession of Damascus and the surrounding country, and made such progress that he might indeed have founded a new dynasty in the west, had not the miserable jealousies between the Yemen and Modar tribes set up a rival against him. Troops were sent to quell the rebellion, but so long as misrule reigned at the Capital, nothing effectual could be done; and so for two or three years Syria was the scene of anarchy. One of the commanders of the Caliph's Syrian army was Al-Hosein, the son of 'Ali ibn 'Isa slain by Tahir,—an ill-conditioned man who alienated the Syrian troops by his partiality for the men of Khorasan. This officer suddenly returned with his army to Bagdad. Summoned on his arrival at midnight by Al-Amin, he sent back the insolent reply that being neither jester nor musician, it was not his wont to appear by night, but that he would do so in the morning. His object, however, was to dethrone Al-Amin. By daylight he had raised the malcontents of the city, whose only safety lay in anticipating the certain victory of Al-Ma'mun. Al-Hosein then crossed the river, and dispersing the Caliph's guards, seized both him and his mother[1] and imprisoned them in one of the palaces. He then proclaimed Al-Ma'mun as Caliph. But at heart Bagdad hated the Khorasanis.

Rebellion in Syria, end of 195 A.H.

Hosein, a Syrian officer, deposes Amin, 196 A.H. 812 A.D.,

[1] Zubeida, who had left Ar-Rakka on Abu Ja'far's death, was met (193 A.H.) by Al-Amin and his chief men at Al-Anbar, and conducted in state to Bagdad.

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Al-Ḥosein had moreover no money wherewith to gain over either the mob or the soldiery; and the leading men dreaded the advent of Al-Ma'mūn. And so it came to pass that in a few days a counter-force was mustered against Al-Ḥosein, who was taken prisoner and brought before Al-Amīn, now reinstated in the Caliphate. The weak monarch not only pardoned Al-Ḥosein, but gave him a new command to proceed to Ḥolwān against Al-Ma'mun. But as he crossed the bridge, the people following hooted at him, and he fled. He was pursued by order of the Caliph, overtaken a short way from the city, and slain. Ibn ar-Rabī', the Wazīr, who had assisted Al-Ḥosein in this singular outbreak, retired from the Court and went into close hiding.

but is taken prisoner,

and slain.

Advance of Ṭāhir, 196 A.H. 812 A.D.

Meanwhile Ṭāhir was steadily advancing. Column after column was despatched against him by Al-Amīn; but they had little power to stay the tide of conquest. The provinces east of the Tigris had already sent in their adhesion to Ṭāhir at Al-Ahwāz; and now all Arabia, with the Holy cities, came over and swore allegiance to Al-Ma'mun. The governor of Mecca, a descendant of the house of 'Alī, denounced in public the iniquity and sacrilege of Al-Amīn in destroying the documents suspended in the Ka'ba; then proceeding to Merv, he was honourably received by Al-Ma'mun, always favourable to that house, and sent back with splendid gifts. At last Ṭāhir crossed the Tigris by Al-Medain, almost within sight of Bagdad, and captured Wasiṭ. Al-Kūfa, seeing no alternative, now accepted Al-Ma'mun; and Mesopotamia from Al-Baṣra to Mosul followed suit. The wretched Capital alone remained. Al-Amīn sought to bribe his followers to fight, and those of the enemy to desert, by money cast lavishly amongst them. But all in vain. Before the close of the year Ṭāhir, ready to bombard the city, planted his camp before the Anbar gate. Harthama, similarly approaching from the east, sat down outside the quarter on the other bank of the river.

Ṭāhir and Harthama before Bagdad, xii. 196 A.H. August, 812 A.D.

Siege and sufferings of Bagdad, 197 A.H. 812-813 A.D.

The sufferings of Bagdad throughout the siege, which lasted for a whole year, were terrible beyond description. The struggle was prolonged not only by the advantage the Capital had in lying on either bank of the river with all its means of transport, but also by the canals which intersected and protected it. The prisons were broken, and there was

A.H. 193-198.

riot day and night. Catapults planted all round the walls cast shot into the city, while streams of Greek fire directed from within against the engines of war, caused great loss of life without. Hand-to-hand fighting went on in every street, and as the citizens threw down stones and missiles on the advancing soldiers, Ṭáhir had to raze to the ground whole quarters for his own protection. The distress of the inhabitants thus hemmed in, and cut off from all supplies of food, was frightful; and the suffering of the women and children, heartrending,—described by the poets of the day as drawing "tears of blood" from those who witnessed them. Palaces costing millions were left in ashes; and the beautiful city, into which the riches of the world had for fifty years been pouring, became a heap of ruins.

Distress at Bagdad.

As one quarter after another fell into the hands of Ṭáhir, the generals of Al-Amín began to drop off into his camp. In vain Al-Amín emptied his treasury, and when that failed melted vessels of gold and silver to gain men for his defence. The populace held by him; but most of those who had anything still to save went over to the invading force. Things had gone on thus throughout the year 197 A.H., and the wretched city was now reduced to the last extremity of distress and want, when Ṭáhir, supported now by most of Al-Amín's own generals, resolved on the final storm. In concert with these, and with Harthama, who had in Ṭáhir's view been too long and inactive on the eastern side, the bridges were cut away and the city carried on every side at the point of the sword. Al-Amín, finding his palace untenable, fled with his mother and children into the strong citadel which Al-Mansúr had built for himself on the brink of the river; while the inmates of his *ḥarím*, crowds of eunuchs and damsels, fled hither and thither in terror for their lives. The citadel was defended by a faithful few, who planted engines at the gates to keep off attack; and here, under shelter of its battlements, Al-Amín prolonged for two or three days his miserable life.

City stormed, i. 198 A.H. Sept., 813 A.D.

Amín takes refuge in citadel.

Evening scene on river bank.

His uncle Ibráhím, one of the few nobles who still held by him, tells us that, about this time, to relieve the sultry closeness of an autumn evening, Al-Amín issued from the palace to breathe the fresh air of the river bank, and sent to call him thither. "I went, and as we sat in a balcony over-

looking the swift stream, Al-Amīn said, 'How balmy the river air; how calm and clear the moonbeams playing on the water!'[1] Then he said, 'Have ye here any wine?' which when they brought we both drank of it; and after that I sang to him one or two of the songs he liked. When I had done, he called for the chief songstress and bade her sing to him. She began with a well-known ode on a pack of bloodhounds. Starting at the words, he bade her sing something else; and so she warbled a tearful sonnet on loved ones far away. 'Out upon thee!' he cried: 'hast thou nothing else?' 'That song thou wast wont to love,' she said, as she began a third about the fate of monarchies. 'Begone!' cried the Caliph, swearing angrily at her, 'and let me see thy face no more!' The startled damsel, as she hasted away in the dim moonlight, stumbled on a priceless crystal goblet set before Al-Amīn, and it broke in pieces. 'See!' he cried again; 'all are against me, and the end is near. Hark! didst thou hear that voice, as if a solemn verse of the Ḳor'ān, from across the river?' We listened; it was but the strained imagination: all was still, and we retired into the citadel." A.H. 193-198.

Amīn's attempted flight.

But two courses were now open to Al-Amīn;—either to surrender, or issuing forth by night, make a bold dash for Syria. He chose the latter; for there were yet horses enough in the royal stables, and faithful men to mount them as his bodyguard. But Ṭāhir, learning the design, threatened the chief men still waiting on Al-Amīn, that if they did not force him to surrender, he would visit them with condign punishment. The timid monarch was easily persuaded to exchange the risks of flight for the prospect of ease and pleasure in banishment. But he resolutely refused to resign himself into the hands of Ṭāhir, whom as a Persian he stood in dread of; it was only to Harthama, who promised to be his friend, that he would surrender. Ṭāhir objected, for this would have implied that Harthama, and not Ṭāhir, was the conqueror of Bagdad. At last it was arranged that while Al-Amīn gave himself up to Harthama, the sceptre, signet, and royal robes should be given to Ṭāhir; and so Harthama prepared at once to

Amīn surrenders.

[1] It was the third week of the first month of the year 198 A.H., when the moon would be bright in the evening, as Ibrāhīm tells us.

A.H. 193-198.

convey the fallen monarch to his camp across the river. Tahir, however, fearing collusion in reference to the compromise, posted men all round the Citadel; and Harthama hearing of it bade Al-Amin wait till he could protect him on the following day. But the unfortunate Monarch could remain no longer in his lonely palace. Deserted by his followers, he had not even water to quench his thirst; and he resolved to leave at once. So embracing his two sons, and wiping the fast-falling tears away with his cloak, he rode down to the river bank, where Harthama waited in a skiff to carry him across. As he embarked, Harthama kissing his hands embraced him, and quickly bade them to put off; but they had hardly left the shore, when Tahir's people attacked the boat with stones and arrows. It sank; Harthama was barely saved, the boatmen seizing him by the hair of his head. Al-Amin casting off his clothes, swam to the shore. Naked and shivering with fright, he was carried to a house, where the following night he was slain by a party of Persian soldiers. His head, after being exposed by Tahir on the battlements, was sent, together with the emblems of royalty, to Al-Ma'mūn.

His death, 24 i. 198 A.H. Sept., 813 A.D.

The victory of Al-Ma'mūn over his brother was once more like the overthrow of the Umeiyads by the 'Abbāsids, the victory of the Persians over the Arabs. It was a fresh stage in the ebb of the tide which had begun to flow nearly two hundred years before. The troops and people of Bagdad repented now that they had not fought more bravely for Al-Amin; but that, says our annalist, was because of the treasure he used to lavish on them. Indeed there was little more that could be said to favour him. His troubled and inglorious reign lasted four years and eight months.

An inglorious reign.

CHAPTER LXVI

AL-MA'MŪN

198-218 A.H. 813-833 A.D.

AL-MA'MŪN had no affinity to the debauchee. We nowhere read of any revelries like his brother's, nor indulgences at variance with the teaching of Islām. On the contrary, his life was commendable, and his reign, if we except certain flagrant cruelties, not only illustrious, but just. Singularly susceptible to influences about him, and loving the East as much as he disliked the West, Al-Ma'mūn now made the fatal mistake of holding on at Merv, where he fell blindly under the mastery of Al-Faḍl, his Wazīr, and embraced the dogmas of the 'Alid persuasion,—dogmas not only hateful at the Capital, but dangerous to the stability of his throne. Hence trouble in prospect for Bagdad, and for the Empire at large.

Ma'mūn persuaded by Faḍl to stay at Merv, 198 A.H. 813 A.D.

Not long after Bagdad had been taken, the local troops and populace rose upon Ṭāhir for the murder of their favourite Caliph, and the banishment of Zubeida with her two grandsons to Mosul; but after a few days, pacified by gifts, they returned to order. Ṭāhir continued at the head of affairs, till Al-Ma'mun sent Al-Ḥasan ibn Sahl, at the instance of his brother Al-Faḍl, as Viceroy to supersede him;—a doubly unfortunate step,—alienating as it did Ṭāhir, and arousing antagonism throughout the older Provinces which feared the floodtide of Persian interest. First, Naṣr ibn Shabath, an Arab chieftain, faithful to the memory of the late Caliph, took up arms to avenge his fall, and, followed by a host of Arabs, seized on the country between Aleppo and Sumeisaṭ. Ṭāhir, sent to oppose him,

Ṭāhir supplanted by Ḥasan, brother of Faḍl.

Rebellion of Naṣr in Asia Minor.

A.H. 198-218.

but sick at the course events were taking, entered without heart on the contest, and, after some unsuccessful battles, retired. Thus Naṣr for many years dominated the borderlands of Asia Minor, while Ṭāhir, in charge of Syria and Mesopotamia, remained spiritless and inactive at Ar-Raḳḳa.

Rebellion of Abu Saraya at Kūfa and Basra, 199 A.H. 814 A.D.

In the following year a more dangerous rebellion was headed by Abu's-Saraya, a notable adventurer, who, beginning as brigand, soon raised a great following, and having gained possession of Al-Kufa, there set up as its ruler a descendant of 'Ali. The fickle city, ready at any moment to rise in favour of the house of 'Ali, and, like others, displeased at the Caliph falling under Persian influence, went entirely over to Abu's-Saraya, who also gained possession of Al-Basra and great part of Al-'Irak, beating back army after army sent against him from Bagdad. He even coined money in the name of his 'Alid *protégé*, and sent envoys of the same stock throughout Arabia and elsewhere. At last, Bagdad itself was threatened, and the Viceroy in alarm sent for Harthama, who, vexed like Ṭāhir with the state of affairs, had retired into seclusion. Harthama soon changed the scene, drove Abu's-Saraya back into Al-Kūfa, and besieged him there. The Kufans, tired of the Pretender and his marauding followers, gave them no further countenance, and so Abu's-Saraya effected his escape with 800 horse. Pursued over the Tigris, he was taken prisoner and carried before Al-Ḥasan the Viceroy, who sent his head to Al-Ma'mūn, and had the body impaled over the bridge at Bagdad. His career was thus, after ten months, cut short; but it was some time before Al-Basra and Arabia settled down. The 'Alid governors of Abu's-Saraya committed great atrocities in various quarters,—to such an extent indeed that one earned the name of "the Butcher," and another that of "the Burner." At Mecca, his upstart envoy attempted to head the pilgrimage, and the ceremonies ended in great disorder. The golden linings of the Ka'ba and its treasury were plundered, and the brocaded covering torn down and divided amongst the insurgents.[1] A rival Caliph was even

Defeated by Harthama and slain, 200 A.H. 815 A.D.

Pilgrimage, Dhu'l-Ḥijja, 199 A.H.

[1] Al-Kindi, the contemporary Christian apologist, tells us that 'Othman's exemplar of the Kor'ān, deposited in the Ka'ba, was burned in the conflagration which he says took place at this time.—*Apology*, S.P.C.K., p. 75.

set up, who continued to rule there for a time, but eventually submitted himself to Al-Ma'mūn and was pardoned. A.H. 198-218.

Harthama having subdued this rebellion returned to Nahrawan without visiting the Viceroy. There he received orders from the Caliph to take up the government of Syria and Arabia. But he resolved first to go direct to Merv, and there warn Al-Ma'mūn of the critical state of things which his Wazir was hiding from him, and that the West would speedily slip from his grasp, unless he made an early return to Bagdad. But Al-Faḍl, anticipating Harthama's errand, poisoned his master's mind against him. It was near the end of the year before he reached Merv which, fearing lest the Wazir should conceal his errand, he entered with martial music. Apprised thus of his arrival, the offended Caliph summoned him at once to his presence, and covered him with reproaches for not more speedily and effectively suppressing the rebellion of Abu's-Sarāyā. As the loyal general opened his lips to make explanation and deliver his warning, the bodyguard rushed upon him, fiercely buffeted him on face and body, and hurried him off to prison, where he shortly died of his injuries, or (as popularly believed) was put to death by Al-Faḍl. So perished, the victim of cruel ingratitude, this great captain who had fought for the empire from Africa to Khorāsān, and to whom in great part Al-Ma'mūn owed success over his faithless brother.

Harthama's journey to Merv, 200 A.H.

Received angrily by Ma'mūn, xi. 200 A.H. June, 816 A.D.

His death.

The fate of Harthama, a favourite in the West, caused fresh excitement in Bagdad. The troops rose against Al-Ḥasan, and abused him as the tool of his brother Al-Faḍl, —"the Magian and son of a Magian." After three days' fighting, Al-Ḥasan, driven from the city, took refuge in Al-Medain, and eventually retired to Wasiṭ. Continual encounters ensued for many months, but without material result. Meanwhile confusion prevailed at Bagdad; and the unfortunate city was for a time at the mercy of bands of robbers, which committed all kinds of spoliation and excess. But the better class of citizens at last banded themselves together, and outnumbering the rabble, held them in check; while two chief men, respected for their wisdom and probity, were placed at the head of affairs. Al-Manṣūr, son of the Caliph, Al-Mehdi, was offered the throne. He declined, but agreed to conduct the government in the name of Al-Ma'mūn.

Rising at Bagdad, 200 A.H.

Ḥasan flies to Wāsiṭ. Beginning of 201 A.H.

Peace restored to Bagdad, x. 201 A.H.

A.H. 198-218.

Towards the close of the year, weary of the struggle, the leaders at Bagdad came to terms with Al-Ḥasan, the Viceroy, who published an amnesty, promising six months' pay to the troops, and the people their allowances according to their stipendiary roll. Things were settling down on this footing, when the Capital was again thrown into confusion, by an act of inconceivable infatuation on the part of Al-Ma'mūn.

Ma'mun proclaims 'Alī ar-Riḍa heir-apparent, ix. 201 A.H. 817 A.D.

This was no less than the adoption by the Caliph of 'Alī, surnamed *Ar-Riḍa* ("the well pleasing"[1]), the eighth Imām of the Shī'a or party of 'Alī, who was summoned to Merv and, though twenty-two years older than the Caliph himself, proclaimed heir-apparent. The Wazīr, no doubt, persuaded his subservient master that this was the likeliest means of putting an end to the 'Alīd insurrection in the West. At an earlier period, a coalition between the houses of 'Alī and Al-'Abbās might possibly have been successful. It was now an idle dream; and at the present moment, when the two factions were arrayed against each other in strife implacable, the act was one of suicidal folly. Thus the edict went forth throughout the Empire that allegiance was to be sworn to 'Alī ar-Riḍa as next in succession to the throne; and the more publicly to mark this new departure, the national dress was changed from 'Abbāsid black to Shī'a green. Towards the end of the year, Al-Ḥasan received from his brother command to proclaim and carry out this order, which fell like a thunderbolt upon the Capital. The Shī'a were feared and hated there, and the 'Abbāsids at court felt the blow as aimed at the very existence of their dynasty. All rose in rebellion, ready to depose Al-Ma'mūn and choose another Caliph in his stead. Al-Manṣūr no longer opposed the measure; and so on the last Friday of the year, instead of prayer for Al-Ma'mūn as reigning sovereign, Ibrahīm, brother of Al-Manṣūr, was saluted Caliph; and shortly after the oath of fealty taken in his name. It is the same Ibrahīm whom we have already met in the moonlight scene by the Tigris. He was the son of Al-Mehdi by an African slave-girl; proficient in music, song, and poetry, he altogether lacked strength

Bagdad revolts.

Ibrahīm proclaimed Caliph, I i. 202 A.H. July 20, 817 A.D.

[1] That is, "the one chosen as such from amongst the Prophet's descendants."—*Ibn al-Athīr.*

for the difficult position which he now assumed, and which with difficulty he held for two years. A.H. 198-218.

Bagdad and 'Irāk in rebellion, 202-203 A.H.

Al-Ḥasan, Al-Ma'mūn's viceroy, was thereupon obliged again to retire to Wāsiṭ, and fighting was renewed between the Imperial troops and those of the Usurper. Al-Ḥasan, thinking to gain over Al-Kufa with its Shi'a proclivities, appointed as its governor a brother of 'Alī ar-Riḍa; and it is significant of the caprice of that fickle city, and the hopelessness of the new coalition, that, while ready to receive him as a purely 'Alid leader, they would hear nothing of him as the Persian representative of Al-Ma'mūn; and so fighting went on there as elsewhere. While the West was in this state of turmoil, a fresh and startling change took place at Merv.

Ma'mūn's eyes opened, 202 A.H. 817-818 A.D.

Al-Ma'mun's eyes at last were opened. The first to tell him the truth, strange to say, was 'Alī ar-Riḍa himself. Things had gone on from bad to worse since his adoption the year before. He ventured now to warn the Caliph that his Wazir was hiding from him the truth; that the people of Al-'Iraḳ held him to be either half-witted or bewitched; and that between Ibrāhīm and the 'Alids the empire was slipping from his hands;—Al-Ḥasan, the Wazīr's brother, was hurrying the West to ruin, while Ṭahir, who might have righted the vessel in the storm, was thrust neglected into Syria. A body of leading men, guaranteed against the resentment of the Wazir, confirmed the facts, and advised Al-Ma'mun's return at once to Bagdad, as the only safety for the Empire. This, they added, was the loyal errand of Harthama, had his Master but listened to him two years before. Al-Ma'mun, now convinced that the insurrection was due to his own subservience to Al-Faḍl, and his Shi'a teaching, gave orders for his Court to march towards the Capital. Arrived at Sarakhs, Al-Faḍl, who had vented his displeasure against the informers, was found murdered in his bath. A reward was offered for the assassins; but these asserted that they had done what they did by command of the Caliph. They were executed nevertheless, and their heads sent to Al-Ḥasan with a letter of condolence on the death of his brother, and the promise that he should succeed to the vacant office. Al-Ma'mun further showed his attachment to Al-Ḥasan by contracting a marriage with his

Sets out for Bagdad, viii. 202 A.H. Feb., 818 A.D.

Murder of Faḍl, March, ix. 202 A.H.

A.H. 198 818.

daughter Buran, a child then of ten years of age; but the bridal ceremony did not take place for another eight years. About the same time he gave one of his own daughters in marriage to 'Ali ar-Rida who was now fifty-four years of age, and a second to 'Ali ar-Rida's son, thus to all outward appearance cementing his alliance with him. A brother of 'Ali ar-Rida was also nominated to the high office of presiding at the annual pilgrimage.

Death of 'Ali ar-Rida, ii. 203 A.H. August, 818 A.D.

Shortly after this another unexpected event took place. In his progress westward, Al-Ma'mūn rested in the autumn for a while at Tus. There 'Ali ar-Rida died suddenly of a surfeit of grapes, and Al-Ma'mūn buried him by the side of his father. The world was startled by this death, following so rapidly on that of Al-Fadl; and the report went forth that the grapes had been poisoned by Al-Ma'mūn. Our annalist (it may be for decency's sake) says he does not believe it; and, indeed, the favour shown to the deceased, and the marriages just mentioned, make against the dark impeachment. On the other hand, 'Ali and Al-Fadl were the two insuperable obstacles in Al-Ma'mūn's way, and by their disappearance the Gordian knot was solved. And so, while in a letter to Al-Hasan he lamented the death of 'Ali, the Caliph at the same time wrote to the citizens of Baghdad saying that as 'Ali, against whose accession they had been so bitter, was gone, nothing was now left to prevent their returning to their loyalty. Though this advance met with but an unceremonious answer, the cause of Al-Ma'mūn began to be canvassed there with some success. Meanwhile, Ibrahim, by his weak and harsh administration, was alienating even the few friends remaining. His troops made no head against the Caliph's; and Al-Medain, where he had been holding his court, fell into their hands. During the winter months, things went from bad to worse with him; and as the captains of Al-Ma'mūn closed in upon the Capital, the chief men, one after another, went over to them. At last, about the end of the year, these gained possession of the city. Ibrahim escaped into hiding, after an ignoble reign of close on two years. For eight years he was lost sight of, but was at last apprehended by the police, walking abroad at an untimely hour of the night in female disguise. He offered his costly ring as a bribe, but that only revealed

Flight of Ibrāhīm, xii. 203 A.H. June, 819 A.D.

his birth; and he was carried an object of ridicule in woman's attire to the court of the Caliph. "Bravo!" cried Al-Ma'mūn; "is it thou, Ibrāhīm?" He appealed for mercy; and it was granted, for it was the time of the bridal ceremony with Būrān, and she made intercession for him. Ibrāhīm celebrated the royal clemency in a poem which is much admired. On its being recited before him, Al-Ma'mūn was greatly pleased, and exclaimed in the words of Joseph to his brethren:—"There shall be no reproach on you this day; God forgiveth you: He is the most merciful of the merciful ones!"[1] A.H. 198-218.

Ma'mūn enters Bagdad, ii. 204 A.H. August, 819 A.D.

While the Capital was being recalled to its allegiance, Al-Ma'mun advanced slowly, halting as he journeyed to secure complete restoration of order before his entry. At Jurjān he remained a month, and a week at Nahrawān, whither the members of the royal house, captains, and chiefs of state came out to bid him welcome; and Ṭāhir also, by invitation, from Ar-Raḳḳa. So advancing, he entered Bagdad early in 204 A.H. The edict still held for green, and so the people at the first dressed accordingly. Al-Ma'mūn, however, having invited his Court to make known their requests, the first favour preferred by Ṭahir was that black might be reverted to. The Caliph graciously acceded, and bestowed dresses of honour in that colour upon his Courtiers. Indeed, the advent of Al-Ma'mūn, after the long rebellion, was conspicuous for the total absence of retaliatory measures. Al-Faḍl ibn ar-Rabī', in hiding ever since Al-Amīn's death, and 'Īsa, Wazīr of Ibrāhim, who had both thrown all their influence into the opposite cause, were now readmitted to favour. The whole attitude of Al-Ma'mūn was, on this occasion, generous and forgiving.

Ṭāhir viceroy in East, 205 A.H. 820 A.D.

Ṭahir was appointed governor of Bagdad, and his son 'Abdallah, equally distinguished, left to succeed him at Ar-Raḳḳa. But whether suspicious of Ṭahir's ambitious aims, or (as is also said) his presence reminding him of his brother's sad death, Al-Ma'mūn now conceived an aversion to him. Ṭāhir, aware of it, prevailed on the Wazīr to propose him for the viceroyalty of the East, where a strong hand was needed. Why, if suspicious of his fidelity, Al-Ma'mūn consented to appoint him to so great a charge, is

[1] Sūra xii. 92.

A.H. 198-218.

not clear. We are told that a confidential eunuch accompanied him with secret orders to administer poison if ever he should swerve from loyalty. After ruling successfully for two years, Ṭāhir, as had been feared, showed signs of insubordination. At the weekly service, he dropped the Caliph's name from its place in the accustomed prayer, substituting for it some vague petition for guidance. The Master of the Post (an office everywhere charged with such duty) immediately reported the alarming incident to the Court; and the next day's despatch, awaited with anxiety by Al-Ma'mūn, brought the expected tidings of Ṭāhir being found dead in his bed. The circumstances of his viceroyalty are singular and obscure, and his opportune decease justifies the suspicion of foul dealing. Still more singular, the name of Ṭāhir remained so great, that, imputation of disloyalty notwithstanding, the viceroyalty of the east was continued in his family. Ṭāhir is famous not only as a soldier and a ruler, but also as a generous patron of learning and poetry. A letter addressed to his son on being appointed to Mesopotamia, in which are embodied instructions on all the duties of life, social and political, is justly regarded a model, not only of perfect writing, but of culture and precept. As such the Caliph so greatly admired it, that he had copies multiplied and spread all over the empire. Ṭāhir, we have seen, was called from his dexterity in the field, *Dhu'l-Yamīnein*, "He of the two right hands"; he had also but one eye, so that a hostile poet said of him:—"O thou Ambidexter, thou hast an eye too little and a hand too much," signifying that he was a brigand who should lose a hand.[1] His eldest son, 'Abdallah, being engaged in the west, Al-Ma'mūn appointed his brother Ṭalha to succeed. At the same time he sent his Wazīr to see to the establishment of a loyal and efficient administration. The Wazīr so deputed crossed the Oxus and waged a successful campaign in Central Asia. On leaving, he received from Ṭalha a purse of three million pieces, and his secretary 500,000; such was the lavish fashion of the day.

His death, 207 A.H. 822 A.D.

Ṭāhir's character.

Ṭāhirid family hold government of Khorāsān.

Naṣr the 'Alid was, up to this time, still in rebellion on

[1] The penalty in the Ḳor'ān for robbery. His letter is given at length by Ibn al-Athīr, occupying eleven pages of the printed edition, vi. 257 ff.

the Western frontier. Ṭāhir, when in Syria, had of purpose carried on operations languidly against him. But 'Abdallah, on succeeding his father, attacked him more vigorously, and drove him into an impregnable fortress on the borders of Asia Minor, from whence, after a five years' siege, he was induced to submit himself to the Caliph; and his return to Bagdad as a loyal subject was celebrated with great rejoicings. But a party of malcontents, who had been in hiding with Ibrāhīm ever since his deposition, now sought to create a diversion against Al-Ma'mūn by sundering the bridge of boats as the procession carrying Naṣr approached. Headed by Ibn 'Āisha, a relative of the royal house, they were seized and treated with singular cruelty by Al-Ma'mūn, who had the leader exposed in the palace court under a burning sun for three days, then scourged, and with several of his companions put to death. His body was impaled in public, the first instance of one of royal blood being so treated. The Caliph may have had reason for the execution of these conspirators; but it was rare for him to resort to such inhuman practices. Ibrahim himself was also arrested about this time, but, as we have seen, freely pardoned.

A.H. 198-218.

End of Naṣr's rebellion, 210 A.H.

Cruel treatment of rebels.

In the same year Būrān, now eighteen years of age, was married to Al-Ma'mūn. Her father Al-Ḥasan celebrated the occasion with a magnificence truly Oriental, at his country residence near to Wāsiṭ. Thither flocked the Court and its surroundings in great splendour; Zubeida too, and the grandfather of the bride, who on the marriage night showered a heap of pearls upon the bridegroom, which, gathered up by his command to the number of 1000, were bestowed upon Būrān. Invited to ask for any special favours, she obtained grace for Ibrahim, and leave for Zubeida to go on pilgrimage. The bridal chamber was lighted with candles of costly ambergris, and Zubeida arrayed the bride in a robe of priceless pearls. Al-Ma'mūn spent a fortnight in this brilliant company, and Al-Ḥasan, to mark his gratitude for the royal favour, spent fabulous sums in presents to all around.[1] Balls of musk were cast amongst the crowd who rushed about to catch them. In each was the name of an estate, slave-girl, steed, or other prize, which

Ma'mūn's marriage to Būrān, ix. 210 A.H. Jan., 826 A.D.

[1] Tradition speaks of sums amounting to a million sterling.

A.H. 198-218.

fell to the lot of him who caught it. Dresses of honour were conferred on all, and so this festival, unparalleled in its magnificence, came to an end. To make amends for all that he spent, the Caliph placed the revenues of certain provinces at Al-Ḥasan's disposal for a year. Such were the vast fortunes that fell in these days to the lot of men in power. Būrān survived her husband over fifty years.

Insurrection in Egypt, 200-210 A.H.,

Egypt had been long the scene of chronic revolt, aggravated by the inroad of adventurers from Spain who joined the insurgents and for several years held Alexandria. 'Abdallah, to whose charge it belonged, while engaged with Naṣr in the north, was unable to turn his arms in that direction. He now attacked the rebels and suppressed the insurrection. The adventurers took ship for Crete, which now (210 A.H.) fell into the hands of the Muslims. About this time also Sicily fell under the Aghlabid arms (though it took two generations to complete the conquest), which further ravaged lower Italy, and as a maritime power dominated the shores of the Mediterranean all around. It was not till August, 846 A.D. (231-232 A.H.) that they appeared before the walls of Rome. But over these western lands the Caliphate now had little power.

put down, 212 A.H.

Bābek's rebellion, 201 A.H. 816 A.D.

'Abdallah, having reduced Egypt, was now employed against the brigand Bābek. This famous freebooter arose in the beginning of the century, and was for twenty years the terror of the northern provinces of the Caliphate. He professed strange doctrines, as transmigration, incestuous marriage,[1] and other tenets of the Eastern mystics. He was followed by multitudes, and held the difficult country towards Āzerbijān. One after another he routed the Imperial forces, which sometimes were cut entirely to pieces in the mountain passes through which they sought to pursue the enemy. 'Abdallah, now sent to the attack, had hardly the opportunity of crossing arms with him; for an outbreak occurring just then at Nīsābūr, he was called away to Khorasān, where he remained as viceroy. The Muslim army being also now engaged with Greece, Bābek was left for a time alone.

Unsuccessfully attacked, 214 A.H.

For sixteen years there had been an armed peace between

[1] Hence called from a Persian term Khurram-ya, or Voluptuaries. He is mentioned by Al-Kindi as the scourge of the empire. —*Apology*, p. 46.

the Empire and the Caliphate. Even the rebellion of Thomas, the rival of Michael the Amorian, did not lead the Muslims to invade Asia Minor. But, no doubt, the reason of this was that Thomas had been crowned by the Patriarch at Antioch in Syria, and, had he succeeded in becoming Emperor, would have been a vassal of Al-Ma'mūn. What made Al-Ma'mun, in the later years of his reign, take the field in person, which he had never done before, and renew the war with the Greeks, may have been that they had made common cause with Bābek on the confines of Armenia. However that may be, early in the year 215 A.H., Al-Ma'mūn set out from Tarsus, and from thence led a successful campaign against the Emperor Theophilus. On the way he received Mohammad, son of 'Ali-ar-Riḍa, gave him in marriage the daughter to whom he had been affianced thirteen years before, and accorded them leave to settle at Medina. There followed in the two succeeding years a second and a third invasion of Asia Minor, and likewise an expedition to Egypt, which was again disturbed;—all three campaigns commanded in person by Al-Ma'mūn.

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Asia Minor i. 215 A.H. March, 830 A.D.

Further campaigns there, 216-217 A.H.

At the close of his life, Al-Ma'mūn was still in the vicinity of Tarsus, returning from his last campaign against the Greeks. To hold them the better in check, he had begun the foundations of a grand military settlement at Tyana, which had been already occupied in 806 A.D. by Hārūn, but abandoned, 70 miles north of Tarsus. The plan was laid out by Al-Ma'mūn himself. The walls, three leagues in circumference, were pierced by four gates, each to be guarded by a strong fortress. Artificers were gathered from all quarters of the empire; and the Caliph, on returning, left his son Al-'Abbas to carry on the work. This martial ardour, emulating even that of Hārun, and coming, as it did, at the close of an otherwise pacific life, is a remarkable trait in the changeful character of Al-Ma'mun.

Ma'mūn commences foundation of Tyana citadel.

As Al-Ma'mūn passed through the ancient city of Harran on his third and last campaign against the Byzantines, he noticed people with long hair and tight-fitting coats. These were none other than Syrian pagans who continued to carry on the religion of their ancestors undisturbed by the advent of Christianity or of Islam until about the year 830 A.D. They were now offered the choice of Islam or the sword;

The Sābians.

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but they escaped from this dilemma, by protesting that they were Sabians—a sect recognised by the Kor'ān. Under this name many of them continued to practise their old heathen rites.

Ma'mūn visits Damascus.

On these expeditions he repeatedly visited Damascus, and gave princely donations to the chief families residing there, and also to the Syrian poets who sang his praises, for he was bountiful even to extravagance. But he had no love for the people of Syria; and when asked to regard them with the favour wherewith he regarded the Persians, he was not slow in recounting their misdeeds and disloyalty towards his dynasty. At the Great Mosque of Damascus he was shown a rescript from the Prophet with his seal, which he pressed to his eyes in reverence, and shed tears upon.

Ma'mūn's Persian proclivities, 211 A.H. 826 A.D.

In point of fact, Ma'mūn never shook off the predilections acquired in Persia, the country of his mother and his wife, nor with them his 'Alid proclivities. In the later years of his reign there was evolved from these a remarkable (though by no means rare) combination of free-thought and intolerance. In some matters indeed the liberality of Al-Ma'mūn was singularly wide. Thus a few years previously, he abolished the ban imposed by his predecessors on the favourable mention of Mu'āwiya or any of the Umeiyad "Companions"; and even to Christians liberty of discussion on the comparative claims of the Gospel and Islām was allowed.[1] But the Persian predilections which he all the time entertained, inclined him at last zealously to canvass the doctrines of the liberal-minded if free-thinking Mo'tazila.[2] He surrounded himself at the same time with theologians

[1] *E.g.* the *Apology of Al-Kindī* could only have been possible under a Mo'tazili court like Al-Ma'mūn's.

[2] That is Seceders. Their principal doctrines were the following: (1) Free-will, in contrast to the orthodox Determinism—good works are from God, evil works from man. Hence they are also called Kadariya, as opposed to Jabriya. (2) The Kor'ān is not uncreated, otherwise there would be a sacred Eternal. (3) God will not be visible to mortal eye on the Day of Resurrection. *Cf.* the heresy of Pope John XXII. (4) Muslims guilty of deadly sin are to be counted as neither Muslims nor non Muslims, but as occupying an intermediate position. The school may have been a spontaneous growth within Islām, or a result of the study of Greek philosophy or of the teaching of John of Damascus.

and divines of all the schools, and had discussions in his presence on such abstract doctrines as man's relation to the Deity, and the nature of the Godhead. In the end he avowed his conversion to certain tenets opposed to the orthodox faith. Amongst these he held Freedom of the Will in place of Predestination; and that the Ḳor'ān, though inspired, was "created," in place of the hitherto undisputed tenet that it is "uncreate and eternal." He also declared his belief that, after the Prophet, 'Alī was the chiefest of mankind; on which dogma is also built up the divine Imamate, or spiritual leadership vested from time to time in some member of the house of 'Alī. Hence also it began to be taught that, "apart from the Ḳor'ān and tradition, there might be other infallible sources of divine guidance. The Ḳor'ān itself was explained allegorically, and difficulties besetting the orthodox, such as offended reason or cramped the growth of society, thus easily evaded.[1] With advancing years the conviction of Al-Ma'mūn in respect of the Ḳor'ān being an emanation in time, led to the unfortunate resolve to impose this view by pains and penalties, on his subjects.[2] When on his last campaign in Asia Minor, he sent a mandate to the governor of Bagdad to summon the leading Doctors, and having tested them on that vital doctrine, to report their answers to him. At this inquisition, held repeatedly, most quailed under the process and confessed. Some stood firm, among whom was Aḥmed ibn Ḥanbal (founder of the Ḥanbali school), who was ordered to be conveyed in chains to the Caliph's camp. We are told of threats, even of death, against two of these; and twenty others who refused to confess were sent under escort to await at Tarsus the return of the Caliph from the wars; but on

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Heterodox views on Ḳor'ān, Freewill, etc., 212 A.H.

Enforces his views with intolerance and cruelty, 218 A.H. 833 A.D.

[1] It was easy thus to justify, for example, the use of wine and temporary marriage (Mut'a). The latter, by which conjugal contract can be entered into for a limited period, is still a tenet of the Shi'a; but is justly reprobated by the orthodox. As regards wine, though we nowhere hear of Al-Ma'mūn's being given to its indulgence, it certainly was handed round in golden beakers at his marriage with Būrān; and other occasions are mentioned by Weil.

[2] One of his arguments was this syllogism; God created all things; the Ḳor'ān is a thing: therefore the Ḳor'ān is created. Also such passages as (Suras xii. 2 and xli. 2) "We have sent down or ordained for thee a Ḳor'ān in the Arabic tongue," etc. "Yes," replied the defendant, "it may have been sent down or ordained, but not created."

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the way tidings were received of his death. Such cruel intolerance dims the lustre of Al-Ma'mun's later years.[1]

Development of science and literature.

For his reign was without question a glorious one, ushering in, as it did, the palmy days of literature, science, and philosophy. He was himself addicted to poetry, and once struck a poet with amazement who, on reciting an original piece of a hundred stanzas, found the Caliph readily "capping" every verse as he went along. At his Court were munificently entertained men of science and letters, poets, physicians, and philosophers. Besides philologists and grammarians, it was the age also of the collectors of tradition, such as the great Bukhari, and of historians, as Al-Wakidi,[2] to whom we owe the most trustworthy biography of the Prophet; and of Doctors of the law, as Esh-Shafi'i and Ibn Hanbal.[3] Moreover Jews and Christians were welcome at the Court not only for their own learning, but as versed both in the Arabic tongue and in the language and literature of Greece. The Monasteries of Syria, Asia Minor, and the Levant were ransacked for manuscripts of

[1] Curiously enough, in a later passage under the reign of the orthodox Mutawakkil, Ibn al-Athir traces the Mu'tazili doctrines by tradition to Labid the Jew, who bewitched Mohammad, taught that the Old Testament was created, and spread the Fatalist creed. It is more likely to have been an offshoot of the Buddhist and Zoroastrian teaching of India and Central Asia, or a Muslim offset to the Christian dogma.

[2] Mohammad Ibn 'Omar died 207 A.H.: and his Secretary, who wrote from his master the famous biography, was one of those had up before the Inquisition just mentioned on the question of the Kur'an. [The biography of Ibn Ishak is older than that of Al-Wakidi, and according to the general opinion more trustworthy.]

[3] Founders of two out of the four great schools of law. The other two were Abu Hanifa (*d.* 150) and Malik (*d.* 178). The school of Abu Hanifa prevails throughout the Turkish Empire, the Malikite in North Africa outside of Lower Egypt, whilst that of Ibn Hanbal survives in Central Arabia amongst the Wahhabis, and that of Esh-Shafi'i prevails in Egypt, Southern India, and elsewhere. A fifth school, that of the Ibadites in 'Oman and at Mzab in the Sahara, is actually the oldest of all. The Persians are of course Shi'ites. There is no material divergence in doctrine between the four, merely matters of ritual. For example, the Hanifites are taught to say *Amen* softly, and forbidden in adoration to raise the hands to the ears, to pray with the legs apart, or to fold their hands across the breast. Our Indian fellow-subjects are much exercised on these trivial points. See judgment of the Privy Council, reported in *The Times*, February 23, 1891.

the Greek philosophers, historians, and geometricians. These, with vast labour and erudition, were translated into Arabic; and thus the learning of the West was made accessible to the Muslim world. Nor were their efforts confined to the reproduction of ancient works; in some directions they extended also to original research. An Observatory, reared on the plain of Tadmor, furnished materials for the successful study of astronomy and geometry. In other walks of literature, we have books of Travel and History, and, above all, of Medicine; while much attention was paid to the less practical, but more popular, branches of astrology and alchemy. It was through the labours of these learned men that the nations of Europe, then shrouded in the darkness of the Middle Ages, became again acquainted with their own proper but forgotten patrimony of Grecian science and philosophy.

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Al-Ma'mun was undoubtedly upon the whole a ruler at once just and mild. Repeated change in views and sentiment, both political and religious, was due partly to Persian training and affinity, partly to a yielding nature which made him unduly subject, as in the case of Al-Faḍl, to personal influence. He cannot be acquitted of acts of capricious violence, some of which are just as cruel as those which stain the memory of his predecessors. One instance of singular inhumanity I should not omit. Abu Dulaf, a brave and noble Arab, was chief of the principality of Hamadan, where his family held a high repute. Having taken the side of Al-Amin, he was unwilling after his fall to bow before Al-Ma'mūn, and so retired to his Persian home. A blind poet composed a beautiful but extravagant panegyric, lauding his friend as the first of the Arabs, which so irritated Al-Ma'mun, as if aimed in depreciation of himself, that he had the poet cruelly put to death. Abu Dulaf himself shortly after surrendered, and his honourable reception is extolled as an act of grace on the Caliph's part which cannot, however, affect our judgment of his heartless criminality towards the blind poet.[1] For the rest, even

Ma'mūn's reign brilliant and just;

certain caprice and cruelty notwithstanding.

[1] According to a grand-nephew of the Caliph, who tells the story, the verse which offended Al-Ma'mūn was to the effect that "every Arab entering the lists of glory must borrow his nobility from Abu Dulaf," which Al-Ma'mun thought to be a slight upon himself. The blind poet

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leaving out of account the dark imputations as to the death of Al-Fadl and 'Ali ar-Rida, we have still the cruel treatment of Ibn 'Aisha, as well as the fate of Harthama and Tahir, to both of whom he owed so much; and lastly his bitter intolerance towards victims of the barbarous Inquisition. But considering the length of his reign and his magnanimous attitude towards the rebels of Baghdad, the balance must incline to the verdict of leniency and moderation in a Caliphate which, taken as a whole, is one of the most brilliant in the history of Islām.

Death of Ma'mūn, vii. 218 A.H. August, 833 A.D.

Al-Ma'mūn was eight-and-forty years of age when death overtook him near Tarsus. It was a hot autumn day, and he sat with his brother Abu Ishak on the bank of a mountain stream, in the clear cool flood of which they laved their feet. "Come," said he to the companion who tells the story, "come, see how refreshing to the limbs are these limpid waves. All that we want is but a dish of dates to make the moment perfect!" Just then a mule was heard approaching with a burden of that very fruit. Two baskets full of the choicest dates, fresh gathered from the tree, were brought. They partook plentifully of them, with draughts also of the delicious icy water. As they arose, all three were struck with a burning fever. It was Al-Ma'mun's last illness. The fever gained rapidly; and finding his end to be near, he had a rescript drawn up for all the Provinces, proclaiming his brother Abu Ishak's successor, under the title of Al-Mo'tasim.[1] Then he gave minute instructions as to his own funeral and grave, direct-

excused the obnoxious verse by saying that of course he regarded the Caliph as altogether beyond the range of comparison. Al-Ma'mun then said he would execute him not for that verse, but for another verse, in which he ascribed divine attributes to a mortal, whereupon his tongue was cut out and the poet died a miserable death. The narrator is a son of Al-Mutawakkil, who reversed the policy of Al-Ma'mun. Weil holds it to be a well grounded "historical fact"; but it is not given in the annals of the day; and one would be glad to question it as, at the least, greatly exaggerated.

I should also mention that under the year 200 A.H., *i.e.*, while Al-Ma'mun was yet in Merv, I find the entry: "Al-Ma'mun in this year slew Yahya, because he called out to him 'O thou Caliph of the Unbelievers.'" There is no further explanation given.

[1] "He who maketh his refuge in the Almighty."

ing that none should at it weep or mourn. Calling his brother, he especially enjoined upon him, along with other admonitions for a religious life and just administration, to enforce the right teaching which he held as to the origin of the Ḳor'ân and other doctrines of Islam, and to hasten back to Al-'Irâḳ. He left him also an ill heritage in his love for the employment of a Turkish praetorian guard. So passed Al-Ma'mûn away, and was buried at Tarsus, having reigned twenty years, besides the five preceding, during which he held at Merv the government of the East. A.H. 198-218.

CHAPTER LXVII

AL-MO'TASIM AND AL-WATHIK

218-232 A.H. 833-847 A.D.

Mo'tasim. 218 A.H. 833 A.D.

The troops, at the first, refused to do homage to Al-Mo'tasim, preferring rather, in their growing insolence, to elect Al-'Abbas, son of the late Caliph; but he, summoned from Tyana, at once swore allegiance to his uncle, and the army followed. Tyana was abandoned, the rising walls demolished, and whatever could not be carried off committed to the flames. Al-Mo'tasim then returned to Bagdad.

Intolerant supporter of Ma'mūn's heterodoxy.

Al-Mo'tasim followed his brother Al-Ma'mūn, or surpassed him rather, in the two weak points of his rule intolerance, to wit, and preference for the Turkish soldier. Freedom of discussion, to an extent never dreamed of till the days of Al-Ma'mūn, still prevailed, excepting in respect of the new dogmas of the Court. Science and philosophy flourished under such distinguished professors as Al-Kindi, "the philosopher of the Arabs," whose works, both original and borrowed from the Greeks, have won a European reputation. But from the Mo'tazili creed no divergence was tolerated; to it every Muslim must conform. Two dogmas were especially dear to the Caliph, namely, that the Kor'ān was not eternal, and that by the disembodied eye in the future life, the Deity could not be seen. The severest pains and penalties, even to the death, awaited those who dared to differ. Bagdad was much disquieted by the intolerant rigour of the Caliph and his doctors; the famous Ibn Hanbal was again arrested, and being firm in the faith, was pitilessly scourged, and cast scarred and senseless into prison.

But a still greater trouble threatened the city in the

swarms of Turkish soldiery that with daily-increasing numbers were planted in and around it. They had, in fact, been originally brought in to counterbalance the power of the soldiers of Khorāsān to whom the 'Abbāsids owed the Caliphate. Thousands of *Memlūks*[1] were yearly imported from the North-east. Some formed the bodyguard, the remainder swelled the army; and such as displayed military talent and presence, gaining the Caliph's favour, rose rapidly to chief command. Thus were the Arab soldiery, captains as well as rank and file, rapidly displaced; and, retiring to their deserts, instead of as heretofore pillars of the Caliphate, became a chronic element of disturbance and revolt. The evils of this system,—culminating hereafter in the Memlūk dynasty, the curse of Egypt,—were for the present confined to the Capital and its outlying cantonments. The Turkish horse, galloping in unbridled licence wildly about the streets, kept the women and children in constant jeopardy; and affrays and murders were the consequence. Riding through the city, a Sheikh began to accost Al-Mo'taṣim in the simple Arab style,—"O Abu Isḥāḳ!" The escort set upon him as an ungainly intruder, but the Caliph stayed them, and listened to his words:—"A horde of foreigners," he said, "have been planted in our midst, and from their insolence and rapine there is no escape." Al-Mo'taṣim never again rode abroad in Bagdad. This incident led to the building in 836 of Sāmarrā, with its palaces and imperial barracks, some sixty miles higher up the Tigris. Thither the Caliph retired with his Turkish troops, and Sāmarrā, for over half a century and during the reigns of seven Caliphs, became the Capital of the Empire (836-894 A.D.). Bagdad was relieved, but the Caliph fell more than ever under the hand of these foreign levies.[2]

A.H. 218-232.

Increasing ribaldry of Turkish soldiery at Bagdad,

leads to the founding of Sāmarrā.

The Muslim arms being engaged in many quarters,

[1] The passive participle of *malaka*, "to own"; signifying purchased slaves, chiefly from Turkestan.

[2] Al-Mo'taṣim changed the Aramaean name Sāmarrā to *Surra-man-ra'a*, "whoever sees it rejoices," or *Delight of the eyes*, from the beauty of its situation; or as was wittily said, "*whoever saw it* with the Turks settled there, *rejoiced* at Bagdad being well rid of them." Hārūn had begun to build it when he first left Bagdad. But when he passed on to Ar-Raḳḳa and settled there, the place fell into ruins till Al-Mo'taṣim began to rebuild it.

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Al-Mo'tasim, soon after his accession, made peace with the Greeks and arranged an exchange of prisoners.[1] Among the troubles that threatened, there was first the strange tribe of Indians called the Zott, who occupied the marshes of lower Mesopotamia, levied tolls on the shipping, and at last cut off the supplies of Bagdad. They were put to flight by 'Ojeif, an Arab general, who brought several thousands of them by boat to Bagdad, whence they were exiled to Asia Minor, eventually finding their way into Europe as gypsies.[2] An 'Alid pretender also occasioned some anxiety in Khorasan, but was suppressed by 'Abdallah ibn Tahir now nearly independent ruler there.

Peace with Emperor, 218 A.H. 833 A.D.

Inroad of Zott insurgents, 219-220 A.H.

Bābek's defeat and escape, 218 A.H.

The rebel who continued to cause the most anxiety at Bagdad was the famous Bābek, who long held sway in Azerbijan, and had there the countenance of Armenia and Greece. He now sent his columns south, and the terror spread as far even as Hamadān. Vast multitudes in northern Persia adopted his faith and flocked to his standard. They were attacked with great slaughter, and pursued into Grecian territory. Against the freebooter himself, who retired into inaccessible haunts towards the Caspian, the Caliph sent Afshin, one of his ablest Turkish generals, with a large and well-ordered force. But it was not before two years of hard fighting beyond Ardebil, and not without acts of treachery (too common with these Turkish leaders), that, one after another, the strongholds of Bābek were taken; he himself effected his escape into Armenia, where he was captured and made over to Afshin by an Armenian prince, with whom he had taken refuge. Thousands of Muslim captives, women and children, were recovered and restored to their families. Afshin seized the vast treasures which had been amassed by Bābek during all these years, and from them richly rewarded his officers. He then set out for Sāmarrā, carrying the famous freebooter and his brother in his train. The long career of this brigand prince, who had

Taken captive, 222 A.H. 837 A.D.,

[1] An embassy to Bagdad is mentioned by the Byzantine writers, headed by John the Grammarian; but it is not noticed by Arab annalists. See Bury, *Eastern Roman Empire*, pp. 256 ff.

[2] Their history is obscure. De Goeje: *Mémoires sur les migrations des Ziganes à travers l'Asie.*

been now for twenty years the lord of Azerbījān, and whose endless roll of outrages committed, and of Muslim generals beaten and armies destroyed, had for a whole generation struck terror into the people's mind,[1] made the march a royal ovation for Afshīn. As he drew near to Samarra, the Caliph sent him every day a fresh dress of honour with splendid gifts; and when the cortege approached, went forth in state with his son and the royal household, to bring him in with every mark of honour. Bābek was kept under guard, and thither Al-Mo'taṣim himself with his chief Ḳādi, went in disguise to gaze upon "the Shaiṭān of Khorāsān," as they called him, who was then paraded over the city. Brought back to the palace, the Caliph, surrounded by his men of war, commanded Bābek's own executioner to fall upon him, sever his limbs, and then plunge the knife into his still quivering trunk. The head was sent round the cities of Khorāsān, and the body impaled near the palace. Bābek's brother was reserved to be treated in like manner as a sight for the city of Bagdad, and his body there hung up by the river bank.

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and cruelly executed.

The Emperor Theophilus, taking advantage of the Muslim arms being engaged against Bābek, with whom the Greeks made common cause, had meanwhile been ravaging the south of Asia Minor, and carrying fire and sword even into the heart of Syrian territory. The bitter cry of a captive Hashimi lady, *Shame on Al-Mo'taṣim!* reached the Caliph's ear. *Ready!* he exclaimed, starting up as if he heard her voice; and commenced forthwith preparations for war on the grandest scale. It was the spring of 233 A.H. when he marched for Syria. Passing on to Tarsus, he there marshalled his army in three divisions, led mainly by Turkish captains, and advanced against the Emperor. The objective of his attack was the city of 'Ammūriya (Amorion), the original home of the Imperial dynasty, lying

War with the Emperor, iv. 223 A.H. March, 838 A.D.

[1] Bābek is said to have defeated six famous generals in these twenty years, slain 255,000 men, taken 3300 men, and 7600 women prisoners. Comparing this with the ravages of Moḥammad's army, Al-Kindi asks the Moḥammadan advocate, "Tell me, now, wherein the difference lieth between thy Prophet and Bābek the Khurrami, whose insurrection hath caused such grief to our lord the Commander of the Faithful, and disaster to mankind at large."—*Apology*, p. 46.

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Siege of Amorion.

in the heart of Asia Minor. Theophilus, defeated in a pitched battle, left the city to its fate. After fifty-five days of siege, a renegade led the engines to a defenceless point, and the walls were about to be stormed when a general, named Wendu,[1] issued from the city, and offered to surrender, if terms were given. He was graciously received, and the garrison, relying on the parley, held their hand. But the faithless Caliph meanwhile signalled a fresh attack, and Wendu, riding by his side, saw in consternation when too late that he was overreached. The city, thus easily captured, was treated with the last severities of war.

Burned and destroyed.

Multitudes took refuge in the Cathedral, which was set on fire, and all perished in the flames. The chief families were set aside for heavy ransom, with all the goods worth carrying away; and the rest were put up to the highest bidder. All that remained was committed to the flames, and Amorion left a desolation. Some of the noblest captives were, on refusing to abjure their faith, executed. This was the latest great martyrdom of the Greek Church. Theophilus, making reprisals by sea, a truce was concluded in 841. The Caliph set about repairing the fleet, which the 'Abbasids had neglected; but his Armada was wrecked.

Conspiracy against Caliph.

The happiness of Al-Mo'tasim was, however, damped by an attempt which nearly brought his reign to an untimely end. 'Ojeif, the Arab chief, who had distinguished himself in the Zott campaign, and now commanded the centre column against the Emperor, was roused to jealousy by the favours lavished on the Turkish generals, and by their insolent bearing towards himself and his fellows. Goaded thus, he conspired against Al-Mo'tasim, and persuaded Al-'Abbas to aspire to the throne which at first he had renounced. The plot, joined by other Arab leaders, and even by some of the Turks, was delayed till Amorion should fall, and then the distribution of the spoil was to be the signal for slaying the Caliph and his two Turkish favourites, Afshin and Ashnas. An attempt to seize the spoil and in the confusion accomplish the traitorous design, was crushed by Al-Mo'tasim, who boldly rushed upon the plunderers sword in hand, and

[1] The name is said to mean "an ox." The spelling is doubtful, Tab. iii. 1251. See the account of this campaign in Bury, *Eastern Roman Empire*, pp. 263 ff.

dispersed them. The plot came prematurely to light by the talk of some drunken confederates. The Caliph disbelieved the existence of so widespread a conspiracy, till Al-'Abbās himself, plied with wine, confessed to him the whole. He was made over to Afshīn, who, withholding water to drink, thus killed him, and 'Ojeif met the same fate. For another, carried into Syria, a well was dug, into which he was cast, and the pit filled in upon him while yet alive. Thus, with signal pains and penalties, the chief conspirators were all destroyed. The conspiracy had, moreover, the disastrous effect of throwing the Caliph altogether into the hands of his Turkish captains, and of gradually ousting the alienated Arab and Persian leaders from all chief commands. Among the Turks themselves there was but little love or loyalty to lose; envy and hatred, greed and lust of power made the East but the theatre of intrigue, treachery, and violence, in which there was respect neither for life nor right. And they who suffered most were the Caliphs themselves, who, as long as the Court remained at Sāmarrā, became the miserable puppets of their Turkish generals or the helpless victims of military outrage. About the same time Turks begin to drift into the service of the Emperor.

A.H. 218-232.

Barbarous execution of conspirators.

Turkish begin to supersede Arabian officers.

Afshīn himself was soon to fall. Māzyār, the native prince of Ṭabaristān, withholding tribute, ravaged the south-east coast of the Caspian, and rebelled against 'Abdallah ibn Ṭāhir, now the acknowledged chief of Khorāsān. Afshīn hated 'Abdallah because he had exposed his appropriation of Bābek's spoil, and he also coveted his government. He therefore secretly encouraged Mazyar, in the hope that he might himself be sent with a force to suppress the rising, and so supplant 'Abdallah. But 'Abdallah was able without help to defeat Māzyar, who, taken captive, was sent to Samarra; and there, confronted with Afshīn, accused him of abetting the rebellion.

Afshīn's misdeeds, 224 A.H.

Misdeeds of misappropriation were also charged against Afshīn. The attitude of the Caliph now changed towards him. In alarm he attempted to escape to the Caspian shores, but failing, was arrested and cast into prison. A court was constituted of the chief Ḳadi, the Wazir, and other Courtiers. But, strange to say, the charge was neither for treachery nor embezzlement. He was arraigned for holding

His fall, 225 A.H.

A.H. 218-232.

Afshīn tried as a Magian and enemy of Islam.

Magian doctrines, and for covert hostility to Islām. Princes from Soghd were summoned as witnesses. Two men in rags, with scarred backs, were brought forward. "Knowest thou these?" asked the Wazir, who conducted the trial. "Yes," answered Afshīn: "the intendants of a Mosque in Soghd. They built it on the site of a temple which they razed to the ground, after casting out the idol from the shrine. Now the treaty ran that all were free to follow each his own religion; and so, as breakers of the treaty, I caused them to be scourged."—"And this golden jewelled book of thine, wherein is blasphemy against the Most High?" "It is a book," he replied, "inherited of my father, wherein is the wisdom of the Easterns—good morals and also heresy; the first I used, the last I left alone." Other imputations Afshīn contended were worthless, as based on Magian evidence. At last Mazyar deposed that Afshīn's brother had written a letter couched in opprobrious terms against the whole Muslim race and their religion, and urging return to the old Magian faith. "For what my brother wrote," said Afshīn, "I am not responsible; but doubtless it was written for expediency's sake, and to advance the conquests of the Caliph by artifice, even as 'Abdallah doth in the regions beyond." The chief Kadi, doubting the evidence, came to no conviction on the charge of heresy, but sent Afshīn back handcuffed to his prison, where, not long after, partaking of a dish of fruit sent by the Caliph, he died.[1] His body was hung up to public derision and then burned. Strange rumours spread abroad of idols, jewelled figures, and Magian books found in his house; but the excited Muslim mind was ready to accept any tales regarding the Magians of the day. Mazyar was scourged so cruelly that he sank under the infliction. The trial of Afshīn throws interesting light upon the Caliph and his court, as well as showing the hold which Magian doctrines and worship still retained, and the toleration accorded to them, in the far East. The mass of the people of Persia, though Muslim in name still clung to their old faith, and, had an opportunity occurred, they would no doubt have thrown off Islām and returned to it.

His death, 226 A.H.

[1] He acknowledged he was not circumcised, and stated personal reasons for omission of the rite. The jewelled book was likely Magian; or possibly Buddhist.

The risings under Sunbadh the Magian, the Veiled Prophet, and Bābek, as well as the worship of Abu Muslim, are to be so explained. A.H. 218-232.

Al-Mo'taṣim died not long after, in the same month as his old enemy Theophilus, having reigned nearly nine years. With an arbitrary, but on the whole a kindly disposition, he did nothing to stay the decline of the Caliphate. Of the Turkish captains on whom he leaned in his later days, he bitterly complained.[1] Had he looked to able Arab chiefs for support, it was yet possible to have restored vigour to the body politic. But he went over entirely to the Turks, and courted the influx of barbarian races, whose fatal yoke his successors could not throw off. As proof of his kindness we are told that the palfrey of a poor husbandman having fallen into a quagmire, he helped him up with its burden again. On this, contrasted with the destruction of Amorion, Gibbon has the following reflection:—"To a point of honour, Motassem had sacrificed a flourishing city, 200,000 lives, and the property of millions. The same Caliph descended from his horse, and dirtied his robe to relieve the distress of a decrepit old man, who with his laden ass had tumbled into a ditch. On which of these actions did he reflect with the most pleasure, when he was summoned by the angel of death?" Mo'taṣim's death, iii. 227 A.H. Jan., 842 A.D., and character.

Al-Mo'taṣim was succeeded by his son Al-Wāthiḳ, who, though born of a Greek slave-girl, inherited his father's Persian proclivities, and indeed with even greater intolerance. He was weak and arbitrary in his administration. The story of the Barmekis having been related to him, and how Ar-Rashid had recovered vast sums from their estates, he exclaimed, "What a fine example my grandfather hath set for me." He immediately proceeded to arraign his ministers and their secretaries, and having beaten one and threatened others, despoiled them of vast sums, from 100,000 to 1,000,000 dinārs each. What a vivid conception does not this give us of the corruption of the minions at Court, and the caprice of their Master! Wāthiḳ succeeds, 227 A.H. His rapacity.

[1] In his last days, comparing Al-Ma'mun's able officers with his own, he said to one of his courtiers:—"See what Afshīn hath come to. Ashnas, a poor creature; Itakh and Waṣif, nothing in them." Yet these were the men on whom he leaned.

A.H. 218-232.

Disturbances.

During this reign there were risings, more or less, throughout the Empire;—in the parts about Mosul from the Khawārij; and in Persia from a rebellion of the Kurds; but the worst disturbances were in Syria and Arabia.

Palestine: the Veiled impostor, 227 A.H. 842 A.D.

Just before the decease of Al-Mo'tasim, a serious insurrection broke out in Palestine. A lady having been ill-treated by a soldier who sought to force her door, the husband went against the government, and set up as a leader of the Umeiyad line. Known as *Al-Mobarka'*, from his face being always veiled, he roused the whole country west of the Jordan. The General sent by the Caliph was still engaged with this impostor, when a still more dangerous outbreak at Damascus called him thither. A battle was fought outside the city, and after above a thousand had been slain, order was at last restored. The force then returned to Palestine, where harvest having thinned the insurgent ranks, an easy victory was gained, but at great cost of life to the rebels, of whom some 20,000 were slain. Al-Mobarka' was carried off a prisoner to Sāmarrā.

Disturbances in Arabia, 230-232 A.H.

A year or two afterwards Arabia fell into a troubled state. The Beni Suleim and other Bedawi tribes, with now no career to divert their marauding tendencies, attacked the Holy Cities, plundering the markets and committing havoc everywhere. They were defeated by Bogha, a Turkish general, who to strike terror imprisoned 1500 of them at Medina. While he was called away by fresh disturbances on the Syrian border, this great body of prisoners attempting to break away were surrounded by the inhabitants, and slain by their negro slaves to a man. Order restored in the north, Bogha returned, and waged a long and not always successful campaign against insurgent tribes in the centre and south of the Peninsula.

Intolerant heterodoxy of Wāthiḳ, 231 A.H.

But the danger that chiefly threatened Al-Wāthiḳ was nearer home, and arose, in short, from the rigour with which he enforced his heterodox views. The men of Bagdad, greatly irritated, set on foot a plot against the hated government. It was headed amongst others by a Muslim saint, named Ahmed ibn Nasr, whose unmeasured denunciation of the intolerant Caliph gathered around him a great following. The day was already fixed for a threatening demonstration with flags and drums, when two of the con-

spirators fell to drinking, and issued forth a night too soon. The plot thus prematurely disclosed, Aḥmed was sent to Sāmarrā, where the Caliph arraigned him before a court, not, however, on the charge of a treasonable rising, but of heresy. "What sayest thou of the Ḳor'ān?" asked the Caliph. "That it is the word of God," replied Aḥmed with heavenly ardour, for he coveted martyrdom, and had anointed his body for the burial. "Nay, but is it create?" rejoined the angry Caliph. "It is the word of God," repeated Aḥmed calmly. "And what about the beatific vision?" continued the Caliph. "This that the Prophet hath told us, *Ye shall see your Lord at the Day of Judgment even as ye see the full moon.*" "That he said but in a figure," answered Al-Wāthiḳ; and he began to argue the point. "Dost thou command me then?" asked Aḥmed. "Yea, verily." "Then I may not swerve from the clear teaching of the Prophet." "Ye have heard him yourselves," said Al-Wāthiḳ to the assembled Court; what think ye?" The Ḳāḍi of the western quarter cried, "By thy sacred Majesty! Verily his blood is lawful!" "O satisfy our thirst therewith!" exclaimed the rest,—all excepting Ibn abi Dā'ud the chief, who said, "Give space to repent; haply, he is crazed." "Nay, nay," shouted the Caliph; "leave me alone, while thus in his blood I expiate my sins." And calling for Ṣamṣāma (the famous sword of 'Amr ibn Ma'dikerib[1]) he gave him a mortal blow upon the neck. Thereupon, the rest plunged their swords into him, and he fell a mangled corpse. The body was hung at Sāmarrā by that of Bābek, and the head, sent to Bagdad under a guard, was set up with this inscription,—*The head of Aḥmed, the Heathen and accursed Polytheist.*

A.H. 218-232.

Aḥmed charged with heresy.

Martyrdom of Aḥmed.

Towards the close of his reign there was an exchange of prisoners between the Caliph and the Emperor. The two camps were formed on either side of a river beyond Tarsus. There were over 5000 Muslims, men and women, to be freed; but even here the bigotry of Al-Wāthiḳ prevailed, for with an intolerance almost inconceivable, none were received in ransom but such as confessed the two favourite dogmas of the Court.

Exchange of Greek prisoners, 231 A.H. 846 A.D.

[1] Above, p. 36 f. This sword, of which he was despoiled in the war of the apostasy, is famous in Arab song, as of marvellous temper, and extreme antiquity.

A.H. 218-232.

Death of Wathik, 232 A.H. 847 A.D.

In the year following, Al-Wathik was seized with an insufferable thirst, the result of dissipated living. The remedy prescribed was exposure in an oven, which overheated caused his death. The only credit given to his short reign of six years was for generosity and benefactions, enjoyed especially by the poor of Mecca and Medina. It would take, however, some more substantial praise than this to set against the bigotry and cruel tyranny of which examples have been given above.

CHAPTER LXVIII

AL-MUTAWAKKIL

232-247 A.H. 847-861 A.D.

"WITH Motassem," writes Gibbon, "the eighth of the 'Abbasids, the glory of his family and nation expired." The glory of the *Nation*—the Arabian—had already paled before the rise of their Turkish rivals; the glory of the *Family* was fast setting under the outrage and violence of these same barbarians, whom they had summoned from the East to "the City of Peace." The Royal house were apt scholars, as well as abject slaves. In the Turkish school of tyranny and extortion, perfidy, and bloodshed, they quickly became their masters' equals. And so the Caliphate hurried on to its decline and fall, with only here and there an impotent struggle to arrest the downward course.

Mutawakkil, 232 A.H. 847 A.H.

On the death of Al-Wathik, the courtiers would have done homage to his son, but being yet a boy, the royal turban, robes, and sceptre were all too great for his small frame; and so they chose instead, Al-Mutawakkil, Al-Wāthik's brother.[1] The new Caliph was not long in showing his cruel and vindictive nature. A couple of months had hardly passed before the Wazir, who under Al-Wathik's reign had treated him with contumely, was cast into prison, and his property throughout the Empire confiscated. For months the unfortunate man was subjected to the refined torture of being unceasingly kept awake

His cruelty and rapacity.

[1] The 'Abbasid Caliphs are no longer known by their proper names, but by their royal title signifying some attribute of faith or trust in the Almighty; as here, Al-Mutawakkil, or "He that putteth his trust (in the Lord)." And so with all the future names.

A.H. 232-247.

while he would have slept. At last he was left alone and slept a day and night. Thus strengthened for the trial, he was put into a barbarous press (instrument of torture invented by himself) so narrow that the sufferer was with difficulty forced within it, and lined with spikes which made shift impossible. Thus in agony he lay for days, and died. This as a specimen must suffice. Various other officers of state were victims of the cruel rapacity of the Caliph; and specially the Commander-in-chief, who too had been wanting in respect, and would have shared like fate with the Wazir, had he not purchased pardon by the fine of eleven million pieces.

Fall of Itákh, 234 A.H.

Another dark picture casts a lurid light upon the Court and Caliph's life. Itákh, a general of renown in the Amorian war, and in the campaign against Bábek, a favourite also of the preceding Caliph, was now commandant of the bodyguard, and boon companion of Al-Mutawakkil. In a brawl over their cups one night, Itákh, steeped in wine, so far forgot himself as to fall upon the Caliph and threaten his life. Next morning, coming to himself, he begged that the affair might be forgotten, and it was apparently forgiven. Advised to proceed to Mecca, he was placed over the pilgrim escort with a robe of honour, and given command of all the towns through which the pilgrims were to pass. It was but an artifice to put him off his guard. As he returned through Bagdad, the Governor went forth to meet him with a royal robe and gifts, and, on pretence of presenting him to a Hashimi assembly, closed the door upon his escort as he entered. "Had it been elsewhere than Bagdad," cried the victim, "he had not dared thus"; for Bagdad hated the Turks, and Itákh's friends were all at Samarra, the Caliph's court. Cast into prison, he lingered for some months, weighted with heavy chains, and at last, being denied water to drink, died of thirst. His secretary and sons were also kept in durance till the Caliph's death. Al-Mutawakkil's reign was marked by the return to orthodoxy. The heresies of Al-Ma'mun were abjured; and the Mo'tazili professors had now their turn to suffer persecution. The eternity of the Kor'an was reasserted (234 A.H.), and even to discuss the question of its creation proscribed throughout the Empire. The body of Ahmed ibn

His treacherous death, 235 A.H.

Naṣr, the confessor, was brought back with due solemnity to Bagdad and there, the head rejoined, prepared for burial; while innumerable crowds pressed round, if they might but touch the saintly relics. Among others who suffered for the now discarded faith, was the noble and learned Ibn abi Dūwād, who had held the office of chief Ḳāḍi under the three preceding reigns. He was deposed and with his family cast into confinement, and their wealth and lands confiscated. One of the sons purchased freedom for the incredible sum of sixteen million golden pieces: but the father died a few years after, still a prisoner.

A.H. 232-247.

Mutawakkil returning to orthodoxy persecutes Freethinkers, 237 A.H. 851 A.D.

Even more violent was the reaction against the descendants of 'Alī, on whom such favour had of late been lavished. Al-Mutawakkil hated them, and their teaching also. In company with his boon companions he treated the memory of 'Alī the Prophet's son-in-law with indecent contumely. A bare-headed buffoon, with a pillow stuffed in front, dared dance before the Caliph, while they sang around, *Behold the pot-bellied bald one, the Caliph of Islām.*[1] And Al-Mutawakkil, enjoying the scene, joined in laughter with the rest. Such ribald and profane contempt of that which was most dear and sacred to the Muslim heart, alienated his followers at large and met with reproaches from his own son.[2] So far indeed did Al-Mutawakkil carry his hostility that he had the tomb of 'Alī's son Al-Ḥosein razed to the ground, ploughed over and sown with corn; and he even threatened with imprisonment any pilgrims who ventured to visit the shrine of Kerbalā. On the other hand, he honoured the first three Caliphs and even the Umeiyad dynasty, and we read of one beaten to death for speaking opprobriously of Abu Bekr, 'Omar, and 'Āisha. He was thus a thorough Syrian, and loved the Arab race.

And 'Alids.

With the return to orthodoxy, the sumptuary laws against Jews and Christians, long fallen into desuetude under the tolerant reigns preceding, were now reimposed

[1] See above, p. 304.

[2] The profane buffoonery must have produced profound sensation; for the annalist adds, "This was one of the causes which justified Al-Muntaṣir in taking his father's life." But that no doubt is an afterthought.

A.H. 232-247.

Severe enactments against Jews and Christians, 235-239 A.H.

with the utmost stringency, and with new marks of degradation. Coloured stripes must be sewn upon their garments and those of their slaves, with restrictions as to flowing girdles; their women to wear yellow veils abroad; riding confined to mules and asses, with wooden stirrups and knobs upon their saddles; the figure of Satan must be on the door-posts of their houses on which moreover was imposed a special tax; tombs must be level with the ground; they were debarred from offices of State; their children forbidden to be taught in Muslim schools or by Muslim masters; churches recently built to be demolished; and no Cross paraded at their festivals, or erected in any street. To such extent did intolerance march hand in hand with orthodoxy.[1]

Division of empire, 235 A.H.

Early in his reign Al Mutawakkil divided the provinces among his sons, giving the Western to Al-Muntasir the eldest, and the Eastern to Al-Mu'tazz But gradually the latter became his favourite. He was placed in possession of the mint and treasuries; and his name was stamped upon the coinage, indicating him thus as successor to the throne.

Rise of Saffārids.

With such a ruler, and so demoralised a Court, we need not wonder that the bonds of order were everywhere relaxed. Abroad, as at home, rebellion more or less prevailed. In Sijistan the Saffarid adventurers began to supplant the Tahirid family. Azerbijan rebelled, and was with difficulty reduced. Lower Egypt was attacked by a Byzantine fleet which for some time held Alexandria, and Upper Egypt by pagan tribes, which withheld the tribute due from the gold mines, and spread terror over the land. To check these ravages, troops were sent to the southern districts, which (as in our own day) were supplied with provisions by sea from the Suakin coast. The insurrection was quelled, but not without much bloodshed. The leader, 'Ali Bāba, admitted to terms, was carried to Sāmarrā, where he was received with special honour by the Caliph, and put in charge of the pilgrim

Outbreak in Upper Egypt. 241 A.H.

[1] A Christian apothecary who embraced Islām, but after several years returned to his ancestral faith, refusing to recant was put to death, and burned (242 A.H.). This, however, would be held by Muslims to be in accordance with their law.

road between Egypt and Mecca. His tribe still held to their fetish faith, and 'Alī Bābā shocked the men of Sāmarrā by carrying with him an idol of stone, the object of his daily worship. It is strange to see the heathen thus tolerated and honoured with an important trust, while Christian captives, refusing Islām, were put to death. A.H. 232-247.

In Armenia, which in the war with Bābek had been on friendly terms with the Muslim court, the overbearing conduct of a Muslim general, who treacherously sent some of their patricians to Sāmarrā, led to a serious outbreak, in which the hated officer was slain and his troops cut to pieces or scattered in the hills to perish in the cold. A heavy campaign under Boghā "the elder" took a signal revenge: 30,000 were slain, and great numbers sold into slavery. Boghā then advanced to Tiflis, where a prince of the Umeiyad line had established himself as independent ruler. The city, built of wood, was destroyed by streams of naphtha, and 50,000 perished in the flames. He then advanced to the shores of the Caspian and the Black Sea. Certain Armenian princes were sent from thence to the Caliph's court, who, refusing to accept Islām, fell martyrs to their faith.[1] Boghā's success in Armenia, 237-238 A.H.

On the side of Asia Minor, the border was the scene of raids first by the Muslim troops and then by their enemies. The Greeks carried off so many prisoners, that thousands are said to have been put to death by the Empress Theodora, and only those spared who embraced the Christian faith. Some 900 men and women alone were left for ransom.[2] In the next few years, the Greeks again advanced towards Syria and laid siege to Sumeisāṭ; and then the Muslims, aided by the Paulician enemies of the Emperor, made reprisals, carried off immense booty in herds and flocks, and took the town of Lu'lu'a. It was restored in return for a thousand captives, but beyond this, and large moneys paid in ransom, no permanent gain Asia Minor, 241 A.H.

[1] This, told by the Byzantine writers, is not mentioned by our annalist; see Weil, ii. 362.

[2] The number put to death by the empress is given at 12,000. Bar Hebraeus speaks of 20,000 prisoners, of whom 8000 were given up, and 12,000 put to death. We must hope that in such statements there is vast exaggeration.

A.H. 232-247.

accrued on either side. At home, the northern tracts of Syria were in a disturbed condition. Hims expelled its governor, and continued in rebellion for a length of time. Troops from Damascus and Ramleh at last restored order, and many captives were sent to Samarra. But it was the Christians that here as elsewhere suffered most. Having made common cause with the rebels, they were expelled the city, their churches demolished, and one that adjoined the Great Mosque taken within its bounds.

Rebellion at Hims, 240-241 A.H.

Caliph tries Damascus for his court, 244 A.H.

After holding his court for twelve years at Samarra, the Caliph transferred it to Damascus. His predilections were always with the West; and at the capital of the Umeiyads, while regaining the friendship of the Syrians, he would be free from the tyranny of the Turkish soldiery. But after a residence of two months, he found the climate too severe, and returned to Samarra.[1] In that neighbourhood he spent his later years, and lavished untold sums in founding a new residence called after himself Al-Ja'fariya, on the river bank. There he built the *Dome*, a beautiful palace, and the *Hall of Delight*, surrounded with parks and streams and gardens, and crowded with every means of enjoyment, music, song, and gay divertisement. Vast treasures thrown away, for on his death the fairy scene soon became a deserted ruin.

Founds Ja'fariya.

Capricious cruelties.

To supply the means for such extravagance, recourse was had to all kinds of extortion. The offices of State were given to such as bid the highest for them. The case of Najah ibn Selama, chief of the exchequer, is a sample of what prevailed. He made a demand on two officers for arrears of revenue at four million pieces. 'Obeidallah the Turk whose help, as Al-Mutawakkil's Wazir, the debtors sought, bade them give him a note acknowledging two millions. At the same time he persuaded Najah to tell the Caliph that he had made the demand in error when under the influence of wine, and now withdrew it altogether. Thereafter the Wazir went to his Master, and showed the note of hand admitting half the claim. Delighted to get even

[1] He went, we are told, in the months of Safar and Rabi' I, *i.e.*, May to July, and began to build offices for the various departments of State, but was driven away by the boisterous weather, cold, and snow;—a strange experience there for the middle of summer.

so much, the Caliph was equally enraged at the apparent deceit and malversation of Najāḥ, who was accordingly made over to the two debtors to punish as they willed. These subjected him to torture under which he expired, and confiscated the entire property of the family, which just equalled the debt they had to pay.[1] Intemperate hatred of the house of 'Alī was kept up to the end. The famous grammarian Ibn as-Sikkīt, tutor in the house of Ṭāhir, and employed in the same capacity by Al-Mutawakkil himself, happening to enter while the young Princes were present, the Caliph asked him, "Which dost thou prefer, Ibn as-Sikkīt?—these my two sons, or Al-Ḥasan and Al-Ḥosein?" Making no pretence of preferring the former, Al-Mutawakkil bade his Turkish guard trample on his body, and he was carried out dying to his home. A.H. 232-247.

The Caliph, gradually estranged from his eldest son Al-Muntaṣir, had already, as we have seen, conferred on Al-Mo'tazz, the second son, marks of superior favour. His preference became year by year more marked, and Al-Muntaṣir was not only subjected to indignities whenever he appeared at Court, but Al-Mutawakkil, when unable to preside at the public prayer, sent the brother in pomp to take his place. Things became worse and worse: and one night after a carousal, the Caliph, overpowered with wine, abused Al-Muntaṣir so grossly that he could bear it no longer, and resolved on putting an end to his father's life. This could the more easily be done, as Al-Mutawakkil had alienated Waṣīf and other Turkish leaders, confiscated their estates, and made them over to new favourites of his own. So during the night, when he had well drunk and gone to sleep, and the gates had been closed by the guards already gained over by Al-Muntaṣir, Bogha "the less," surnamed "the Winebibber," Musa (acting for his father Bogha the elder, who was in command at Sumeisaṭ), and other conspirators of barbarous name, rushed in upon the senseless Monarch and despatched him with their swords. By his side, a favourite Turk who never left him was also slain. The report was spread that Al-Mutawakkil had been assassinated by this favourite, whom for the crime they had Assassinated by his son, x. 247 A.H. Dec., 861 A.D.

[1] The torture applied to Najāḥ is too gross to be repeated.—Ibn Khallikān, iii. 61.

A.H. 232-247.

put to death,—a tale which of course found little credence anywhere.

Orthodox but cruel, bigoted, and dissipated.

Praise given by the annalists to this reign of fifteen years for the Caliph's return to orthodoxy and generous patronage of poets and men of learning, makes but sorry amends for a life of cruel tyranny, bigotry, and self-indulgence.

CHAPTER LXIX

AL-MUNTAṢIR AND THREE FOLLOWING CALIPHS

247-256 A.H. 861-870 A.D.

Muntaṣir, 247 A.H. 861 A.D.

AIDED by the Turkish faction Al-Muntaṣir succeeded without much difficulty to the throne. His pious title—*He that triumpheth in the Lord*—did not avail to prolong his reign above half a year, or save him from the pangs of a parricide. Notwithstanding his crime, he is lauded because, unlike his father, he loved the house of 'Ali, and removed the ban on pilgrimage to the tombs of Al-Ḥasan and Al-Ḥosein. The Turkish party, fearing the revenge of his brothers for having connived at the murder of their father, prevailed on Al-Muntaṣir to disentail them from the succession, and in their place appoint his son as heir-apparent. The Wazir, jealous also of Waṣif, persuaded Al-Muntaṣir to send him on a campaign against the Greeks. Early in the following year the Caliph died, but whether a natural death, or poisoned, is uncertain.[1]

His death, 248 A.H. 862 A.D.

Musta'in elected by Turks.

On Al-Muntaṣir's death, the Turkish chiefs held a conclave to select his successor; they would none of Al-Mo'tazz, nor his brothers, for the reason just stated; so they elected in his stead another grandson of Al-Mo'taṣim,

[1] He is first of the 'Abbāsids whose tomb is known; it was made by his mother, a Greek slave-girl. The earlier Caliphs desired their tombs to be kept secret, for fear of desecration.

A.H. 247; 256.

and saluted him under the title of Al-Musta'in.[1] Suddenly the Arabs and western troops from Bagdad, displeased at the choice, attacked the assembly, broke open the prisons, and plundered the armoury. They were attacked by the Turkish and Berber soldiery, and after a round fight, in which many fell, succumbed. Bagdad had yet to learn that the Caliphate no longer depended on Arabian choice, but had passed into other hands. Mohammad, grandson of Tahir, governor of Bagdad, persuaded the city to submit, and the succession was thereafter peaceably acknowledged throughout the land. Al-Mo'tazz and Al-Mu'eiyad his brother, threatened by the troops, resigned their title to succeed, and were then, by way of protection, kept in durance. On a second outbreak in their favour, the Turks would have put them both to death, but the Wazir interposed and saved their lives, for which act of mercy his property was seized by the Turkish soldiery, and himself banished to Crete. The Turk, Atamish, held the entire patronage of office at his pleasure, and so his fellows as a rule were presented to provincial governments and commands. The Empire, in fact, both at home and abroad, had passed into the hands of Turcomans.

Disorder in Bagdad and Samarra.

Disasters in Asia Minor and Armenia, 249 A.H. 863 A.D.

For the last fifty years the balance of war had gone upon the whole against the Empire; but in the following year, the Muslim campaign against the Christians was singularly unfortunate. Two whole corps in Armenia and Asia Minor, some 3000 strong, with their leaders, were cut to pieces. The tidings drove Bagdad wild. The ancient cry for a

[1] This table will explain the relationship :—

1. Mo'taṣim (brother of Al-Ma'mūn).

Mohammad.

5. Al-Musta'īn. 2. Al-Wāthiḳ. 3. Al-Mutawakkil.

7. Al-Muhtadi.

4. Al-Muntaṣir. 6. Al-Mo'tazz. 8. Al-Mo'tamid. Al-Mu'eiyad. Al-Muwaffaḳ.

9. Al-Mo'taḍid.

10. Al-Muktafi.

Holy War rang through the streets. It was the godless Turks that had brought disaster on the faith, murdered their Caliphs, and set up others at their pleasure. With such cries the city rose in uproar; the gaols were broken and the bridges burned. But Bagdad could no longer dictate to its rulers; it could only riot. The crusading spirit was, however, strong enough to draw large levies from the provinces around, who flocked as free lances to fight against the infidel. But the Turks cared for none of these things, nor did the Caliph. They were far otherwise engaged. The leaders had fallen out amongst themselves. There was riot and plundering and breaking of the gaols again at Sāmarrā. After this was put down, Boghā and Waṣīf conspired against Atamish, who was accused of squandering the revenue on the Caliph's mother and retainers. Attacked in the palace, he attempted in vain to fly, or secure protection from the Caliph; and after being surrounded for two days was seized and put to death. Meanwhile the tyrant courtiers of Sāmarrā, kept Al-Musta'in at their mercy by having his cousin Al-Mo'tazz as rival in reserve.

A.H. 247-256.

Cry for Holy War; and riot at Bagdad.

Outrages of Turks.

Meanwhile, things were not prospering elsewhere. Al-Kūfa threw itself into the arms of Yaḥya, a descendant of the Prophet, who beat back the imperial troops, but at last fell in battle. His head was exposed at Sāmarrā, and then sent to Bagdad for a similar purpose. But so vast were the crowds that thronged the spot, and so intense their excitement as they cried—"What would the Prophet say to this outrage on his own flesh and blood!" that the head had to be removed, placed in a box, and guarded in the armoury. In the East, the Ṭāhirid dynasty, still nominally dependent on the Caliphate, and hitherto a real support, was falling rapidly into decay before its Ṣaffārid enemies on the side of Sijistan, and the 'Alid aspirants on that of Ṭabaristan.[1] The latter, now founding a Shi'a dynasty that survived for half a century, advanced upon Al-'Irak, and an army had to be sent for the protection of that frontier. To the south, another 'Alid pretender, with a following of freebooters, ravaged Arabia, plundered the Ka'ba, exacted heavy ransom

Disturbances throughout the Empire, 250 A.H. 864 A.D.

Disturbances in Arabia.

[1] There is mention of two elephants sent to Bagdad by the Ṭāhirid prince, with some idols taken at Kabul, where idolatry seems still to have prevailed, or perhaps some development of Buddhism.

A.H. 247–250

from the Holy Cities, slew over a thousand pilgrims, and after keeping the Peninsula throughout the year (251 A.H.) in terror and distress, retired at its close to Jidda. In Mosul and Palestine, in Hims and Ispahan, in fact, in every quarter, we see anarchy and rebellion rife.

Musta'ín returns to Bagdad. Beginning of 251 A.H. 865 A.D.

For Al-Musta'ín himself the end was now at hand; and for Bagdad the horrors of another siege. Bogha "the less" and Wasíf, the two chief Turkish leaders, fell out with Baghir, another Turk, about an estate received in reward for Al-Mutawakkil's murder. The quarrel, as usual, bred riot and danger to the Caliph, who, hearing that Baghir's party sought his life, proceeded in concert with the other two to seize and imprison Baghir, and eventually put him to death. On this the Turkish troops in Sámarra rose in anger and rebellion; and the wretched Caliph, to escape his tyrants and the impending danger, descended by boat, with Bogha, Wasíf, and others, to East Bagdad. The Turks sent after him a party of their captains, entreating him to return to Samarra. But this the Caliph would not, and hard words followed between the two sides, in the heat of which one of the Turkish speakers received a blow. The

Turks elect Mo'tazz Caliph, march on Bagdad,

insult rankled in their minds, and on returning to Sámarra, the troops rose *en masse*, and bringing forth Al-Mo'tazz from his confinement, saluted him as Caliph. Within a few weeks, his brother Abu Ahmed, with 50,000 Turks and Khorassáns, and 2000 Berbers, bore down upon Bagdad, which meanwhile had been preparing as best it could for defence by entrenchments, stores of naphtha, and engines planted at the gates.

and besiege the city throughout the year 251 A.H. 865 A.D.

It is a harrowing chapter which details the horrors of the year,—the siege and sallies,—while the country all around was embroiled and suffered with its Capital. Victory was now on this side, now on that. Persia and the provinces were mostly in the interest of Al-Musta'ín; but all were so disorganised that no real help arrived; and supplies and tribute sent were mostly intercepted on the way. In truth, the Arabs, Al-Musta'ín's chief support, could not stand against the Turkish hordes. A column sent from Ar-Rakka for the defence of Bagdad having been ignominiously defeated, the Governor exclaimed,—"*What use of Arabs now without the Prophet and angelic aid?*" The taunt had truth. It was no longer for the faith they fought,—the faith that

had nerved them in bygone days to victory. It would be unprofitable to follow the weary accounts given us month by month of fighting in and around the Capital. The Turks began gradually to gain ground, and the chiefs around Al-Musta'īn to desert the failing cause. The citizens at last suspected their Ṭāhirid governor, hitherto the Caliph's loyal supporter, of leaning towards the rebels; and he, driven to extremities by plots and treachery all around, induced Al-Musta'īn by alternate threats and promises to abdicate in favour of Al-Mo'tazz. He was to live at Medīna with a sufficient income; Boghā and Waṣīf, who had faithfully stood by him, were to have important governments; the treasure was to be divided between the garrison of Bagdad and the Turks, the latter with a double share. The conditions signed, the Governor received the ministers and courtiers of Al-Musta'īn, and having assured them he had done what he had for the best and to stop further bloodshed, sent them to Sāmarrā to do homage to the new Caliph, who ratified the terms, and took possession of Bagdad in the early days of 252 A.H. He also sent to Al-Musta'īn his mother and family from Sāmarrā, but not until they had been stripped of everything they possessed.

A-H. 247-256.

End of 251 A.H.

Musta'īn abdicates. Beginning of 252 A.H. 866 A.D.

Al-Mo'tazz, thus placed upon the throne, proved but too apt a pupil of his Turkish masters. He was surrounded by parties each jealous of the other. At Sāmarrā, the Turks were at daggers drawn with the "Westerns" (Berbers and Moors); while the Arabs and Persians at Bagdad, who had supported Al-Musta'īn, regarded both with equal hatred. Al-Mo'tazz was thus hemmed in by a horde of hungry harpies, ready for plot or treachery whether against each other or against himself:—a poor justification, however, for the course of perfidy and bloodshed which he, not less than they, pursued.

Mo'tazz succeeds.

He began with the deposed Caliph. The conditions solemnly guaranteed were cast to the winds. Instead of finding a refuge at Medīna, Al-Musta'īn was kept at Wāsiṭ. Thence he was treacherously despatched, together with his wife, by Aḥmed ibn Ṭūlūn, to the house of an assassin, who put them both to death. Carrying Al-Musta'īn's head to the Caliph, "Here," cried the executioner, "behold thy cousin's head!" "Lay it aside," answered the heartless

Mo'tazz causes Musta'īn to be assassinated,

A.H. 247-256.

Al-Mo'tazz who was playing at chess—"till I have finished the game." And then, having satisfied himself that it was really Al-Musta'in's head, he commanded 500 pieces to be given to the assassin as his reward.[1] Al-Mu'eiyad, his own brother, being next heir to the throne, was also cruelly put to death. The Turkish soldiery, in a brawl with the Westerns, had taken this brother's part, and the jealous Caliph forthwith cast him, and also another brother, Abu Ahmed, who had bravely led the troops in the late struggle on his side, into prison. There the Turks attempted Al-Mu'eiyad's release, and Al-Mo'tazz, the more alarmed, resolved on his death. He was smothered in a downy robe (or, as others say, frozen in a bed of ice), and the body was then exposed before the Court and Kādis, as if, being without mark of violence, he had died a natural death—a transparent subterfuge.

and one of his own brothers.

Bogha and Wasif, instead of promised preferments, were cut off altogether from the civil list; orders were also issued for their assassination; but, at the intercession of a Princess at court related to them, their lives were spared. They returned with their families to Sāmarrā; and Bogha, in the strange vicissitudes of the day, became soon after the prime favourite of the Caliph. Riot succeeded riot, both at Sāmarrā and Bagdad. The revenues were squandered at the profligate Court, and little left wherewith to pay the troops. The city guards at the Capital surrounded the palace at Bagdad, clamorous for their pay. The Governor wrote to Al-Mo'tazz for an advance: but he, prompted by the Turks, replied that "if the guards were needed for himself, he himself might pay them; if for the Caliph, he cared not for them." Thereupon the tumult was renewed; the mob refused to let the Caliph be named in the Mosque, and so there were no prayers observed that Friday. Before the insurrection was put down, the Governor had to burn one of the bridges, and set fire to an adjoining bazaar, in order to keep the rebels off. Nor were the outbreaks at Sāmarrā less outrageous. The Turks fell out with the Westerns, and fought till it was arranged that

Riots in Bagdad and Sāmarrā, 252 A.H.

[1] So according to Ibn Al-Athīr. Other authorities are not so clear as to the connivance of Ahmed, founder of the Tūlūnid dynasty.—Weil, ii. 398.

they should have each a representative in the chief offices of State. Next year all joined together, Turks, Africans, and Persians, to storm the palace for their pay. Wasif and Bogha, now the Caliph's chief advisers, sought to appease them. "Here, take this," the former cried, as he cast a handful of sand to them,—"it's all we have." The other promised to represent their case to the Caliph, and while he went, the savage soldiery fell on Wasif, and having cut him to pieces, stuck his head upon a chimney. To the offices of the deceased succeeded Boghā, who for the moment ruled supreme. But his time, too, shortly came. He sought the following year to induce Al-Mo'tazz to transfer his court to Bagdad, where he would be more independent of the foreigners. His jealous rivals represented this as treachery; and Boghā fled but only to be seized and slain. His head was exhibited both at Samārrā and at Bagdad, where the Westerns vented their hate by burning it to ashes.

A.H. 247-256.

Palace stormed, 253 A.H.

Wasīf and Boghā murdered, 254 A.H.

Bābkiyāl (or Bāykibāl) succeeded Boghā. He was invested with the government of Egypt, which, like other Turks promoted at the Court, he administered through a deputy; and for the post he appointed as his representative Aḥmed ibn Ṭūlūn, the one concerned in the death of Al-Musta'īn, and founder of the Ṭūlūnid dynasty. Aḥmed's story is typical of the times, both in respect of the sudden rise of slaves to office, and the tendency of local governors to become independent of the central power. His father, a Memlūk, captured in Ferghāna, was presented to Al-Ma'mūn, and brought up among the Turkish slaves at court to the military profession. Aḥmed, bred thus in the school of Samarrā, was favoured by the Caliph as excelling both in the art of war, and in letters and the arts of peace. Al-Musta'īn promoted him to a post of honour, and gave him a young slave to wife, who became mother of the Ṭulūnid princes. Bābkiyāl now sent him as his deputy to Egypt, where gradually growing in power, he at last threw aside the yoke of the decrepit Caliphate, and became independent ruler of Egypt.

Aḥmed ibn Ṭūlūn appointed to Egypt.

Ṭūlūnid dynasty.

The policy of Al-Mo'tazz was as crooked abroad as it was at home. The Ṭahirid dynasty in its decay was sorely pressed by Ya'kub son of Leith the Saffar (coppersmith) of Sijistān, who had designs of annexing Kirmān, and to

Foreign policy not successful.

A.H. 247-256.

validate his claim sought the grant of its government from the court of Bagdad. 'Ali, the governor of Fars, who also aimed at independence, made the like request. Al-Mo'tazz conferred the title at once on the one and on the other, hoping by the contest that must ensue to weaken both; but the Saffarid in the end prevailed. Nowhere did the arms of Al-Mo'tazz meet success. Mosul, with the surrounding country, was seized by Mus'wir, a Khariji, who held it in rebellion for many years. In Asia Minor the Muslim forces were beaten by the Greeks, one of the generals being made prisoner. And even from the adjacent provinces immediately around Bagdad, the revenue was withheld.

Military riot for arrears of pay.

Little more need be said of Al-Mo'tazz. A dwindling revenue precipitated the end. The army's pay having been withheld, Salih son of Wasif, on their behalf, seized the personal secretaries of Al-Mo'tazz and of his brother, with the ministers of departments, and demanded the money embezzled or concealed by them. There being no answer but an empty treasury, they were put in irons. The Caliph besought the insurgents to release his private secretary, but they were deaf to his entreaty. The accounts of the unfortunate ministers were seized, but neither thus nor otherwise could anything be extracted from them. Returning to the Caliph, they agreed that if he would but advance 50,000 pieces, they would for the present be content. Al-Mo'tazz, in this extremity, sent to his mother, Kabiha (ugly), a sobriquet given her by Al-Mutawakkil for her beauty. Her arts and influence had gained for her vast treasures, hoarded by her in secret places. Appealed to now, the heartless creature, clinging to her ill-gotten lucre, replied that she had nothing by her. Salih, and Musa son of Bogha, now driven to extremities, resolved, in concert with Babkiyal, to depose Al-Mo'tazz, and carried out the design with brutal inhumanity. Followed by a clamorous troop, they seated themselves at the palace gate, and called for the Caliph to come out. He had taken physic, he sent to say as an excuse; and not suspecting treachery, called them in. Entering, they beat him with clubs and kicked him; then dragging him by his torn robes outside, they left him seated there in the scorching heat of a mid-summer sun. Taken thence, he was shut up in a room

Mo'tazz seized and put to death.

alone without food or water; and so after three days the wretched Caliph died, at the early age of twenty-four. A.H. 247-256.

The choice of the Turks now fell on his cousin Al-Muhtadi, son of Wāthiḳ by a Grecian slave-girl. Retired and unassuming, they regarded him as one likely to serve their ends. But they mistook the man. Firm and virtuous as compared with those before him, he held to his own purpose. Earlier, and supported by the Arabs, he might have restored life to the Caliphate. But, both as regards number and discipline, foreigners had now the upper hand. Al-Muhtadi came too late. "The wide world," says our annalist, "was all upside down." At first he declined the offer, thinking it unjust to Al-Mo'tazz. But the deposed Caliph, brought before him, resigned into his hands the burden he could no longer bear; and so all Samarra did homage. Bagdad rose in tumult, and demanded that Abu Aḥmed, the late Caliph's younger brother and the people's favourite should succeed. Money from Sāmarrā —the panacea of the day—pacified the people; riot thus stayed, the oath was taken. The Court soon saw a transformation, unwonted for many a day;—singing girls and musicians expelled; beasts in the menageries slaughtered, and hounds turned adrift; justice done daily in open court; wine and games proscribed; and a frugal household. The new Caliph, in fact, had set the pious 'Omar, son of 'Abd al-'Azīz, before him as his model and exemplar.

Muhtadi succeeds, vii. 255 A.H. June, 869 A.D.

His virtues.

On Al-Mo'tazz's fall, Ṣāliḥ, son of Waṣif, lost no time in stripping of their wealth such of the courtiers as had fattened upon the recent Caliphate. The secretaries were imprisoned, and forced by the lash to disgorge. Two died under the infliction. Ḳabīḥa had fled to a vault outside Samarra with her treasure. She was traced, and confessed to having at Bagdad over a million pieces of gold. It was all seized, and with it a store of emeralds, pearls, and rubies of untold size and beauty; while she herself was banished to Mecca. As she left, Ṣāliḥ upbraided her for having with all these treasures grudged a paltry fifty thousand to save her son; and she in return cursed him in vilest terms,—a painful picture of courtly Samarra. The tyranny of Ṣāliḥ, and fate of the officers tortured, affected Al-Muhtadi deeply. Referring to Ḳabiḥa,—"As

Ṣāliḥ's cruel extortion.

A.H. 247-256.

for me," he said, "I have no mother[1] on whose slave-girls and retainers to spend hundreds of thousands; I have no need but for myself and brothers, and that but little."

Riot and outrage in Bagdad, 255 A.H.

A few months after, there occurred another riot at Bagdad. The Persian governors, especially those recently appointed of the Tahirid family, were attended by escorts from the East, whose names not being entered on the civil list, they were paid from a separate fund, and adjustment made from the treasury of Merv. Suleimân, head of that house, hard pressed by his enemies and obliged to fly from Khorâsân, was now nominated governor of Bagdad; and his predecessor having carried off the Eastern fund, he was driven to pay his escort from that belonging to the native garrison. These resented the misappropriation and, joined by the citizens, rose against the Eastern troops, who retaliated in robbery and outrage. The danger was increased by a Persian general who had accompanied Suleiman with a great following of soldiers and freebooters; and these now spreading themselves over Mesopotamia, drew thousands by the cry of plunder to the unfortunate city. After much fighting, they were forced to leave, and taking their way back by Nahrawân, ravaged the country as they went. Thus from every side, foreign levies, attracted like vultures to their prey,—whether Turks and Khorasams, Persians, Negroes, or Berbers,—all brought misery and outrage on the wretched "City of Peace."

Mûsa's attack on Muhtadi, 255 A.H.

Mûsa son of Bogha, under the previous reign, had been sent to war against the 'Alid dynasty set up in the Deilem, which had assumed a threatening attitude. On the troops conspiring against Al-Mo'tazz, Kabîha had urged Mûsa to return and save her son; but soon after news of his death reached the camp, and so Mûsa remained with the army for the defence of Ar-Reiy. Then followed tidings of the excesses and extortion of Sâlih; and Mûsa's captains, lusting for a share in the spoil, forced

[1] On Wâthik's death, Al-Musta'în had taken her to wife, and on his assassination, she was confined by Al-Mo'tazz in Bagdad, where she died. Such was the wretched life of these 'Abbâsid princesses.

him, against Al-Muhtadi's command, to return with them to Sāmarrā. There he went straight to the Caliph, who was seated on the bench dispensing justice, and after altercation, carried him off on one of the attendant's horses, when the usual scene of riot and plunder followed. Reasoned with by Al-Muhtadi on the scandalous affront thus offered to their Sovereign's person, Musa and his followers returned to their loyalty, on assurance given that the crimes of Ṣalih would be reckoned with and justice done. A.H. 247 256.

Ṣālih, now deserted by his friends, fled into hiding. Thence, by an unknown hand, he sent the Caliph a letter, offering submission to trial and restitution. Al-Muhtadi being in favour of this, the Turks assumed that he knew his hiding-place, and was conniving with him. They resolved on his dethronement; but Al-Muhtadi bravely met them sword in hand, ready to thrust through the first that should approach. He protested that he knew nothing of Ṣālih's retreat, and promised public inquisition on the morrow after prayers. Meanwhile, the people learning the traitorous proceedings of the Turks, were so touched by the peril in which a Sovereign whom they had learned to respect and love was in, that they scattered throughout the streets and lanes of Bagdad, sheets on which was inscribed a call for prayer and intercession with the Lord to save their pious Caliph and confound the designs of the rebel Turks. A band of the foreign troops touched by the appeal, rallied round Al-Muhtadi, who promised his best to reform the government, provide for payment of all dues, bring Ṣalih to justice, and Mūsa also to account. Search for Ṣalih still continued without success and with danger to the Caliph, when fortunately he was discovered, pursued by the mob, and delivered over to Musa's retainers, who slew him and exposed his head, with the proclamation (strange sentiment for the Turks), "Such is the fate of him that slayeth his Master." Ṣālih pursued, i. 256 A.H. Dec., 869 A.D., and murdered, ii. 256 A.H. Jan., 870 A.D.

Things went on thus for several months, when the cry arose again from the Turkish garrison of Bagdad for arrears of pay. The Caliph told them that the treasury was empty, as Musa's brothers,—sons of the elder Bogha, the party now in opposition to Al-Muhtadi,—had embezzled all the revenues. These fled to Musa, who, with Bābkiyal, was now engaged Muhtadi again in difficulties.

A.H. 247–256.

at Mosul with Musawir's insurrection. Driven to desperation, Al-Muhtadi himself stooped to perfidy. He sent, or suffered a Turkish party to send, promise of safe-conduct to the brothers; and when they came, not only exacted great sums of revenue from them, but caused one to be slain and cast into a well. Then he wrote to Musa to make over the army to Babkiyal and return to Samarra; while at the same time he wrote to Babkiyal to compass the death of Musa. But Babkiyal, on whose loyalty and friendship Al-Muhtadi had counted, went over to the side of Musa. Having shown him the letter, they both resolved to return at once to Samarra, and there bide their time for putting an end to the Caliph's life. On their arrival, however, Al-Muhtadi, anticipating their design, seized Babkiyal, and resolved bravely to fight for the right, or perish in the attempt. Six thousand soldiers rallied round him, mostly Arabs and Westerns; but amongst them were also one thousand of the late Salih's Turks. The rebels came on, double the number, to the attack of Al-Muhtadi; on which, he gave the order to slay Babkiyal, and cast his head into the rebel ranks. But the day was gone. The faithless Turks deserted to the other side, and the rest lost heart. In vain Al-Muhtadi shouted, "Here is the Commander of the Faithful; haste to the rescue of the Caliphate!" There was no response. Passing the prison, he threw open its gates, hoping that the inmates would help him; but this too was in vain. And so he fled for refuge to the Commander of his bodyguard's house. Thence, seated on a mule, he was carried to the palace of a Turkish general, and pressure put upon him to abdicate. He refused, and prepared for the end. Then, to give the appearance of justice to their work, the conspirators produced a paper in which Al-Muhtadi had guaranteed Musa and the rest that he would not use treachery towards them, which if he did they were released from their oath of fealty. Having thus, to their satisfaction, justified the sentence, they fell tumultuously upon him, with blows and kicks, and removed him into confinement, where, a few days after, he died. Witnesses deposed that there were no marks of violence on his body, which was buried with his predecessors. He was aged thirty-eight, and had reigned less than a year. The annalists laud his justice and his piety; and had he not yielded at last

Defeated by insurgents.

Put to death, vii. 256 A.H. June, 870 A.D.

and met perfidy with the like, we might have placed Al-Muhtadi amongst the most excellent of his race. A.H. 247-256.

Mohammad, one of Boghā's sons, was found dead, having fallen in the fight. Over his grave, after the rude fashion of the Turkomans, a thousand swords were shivered. A Turkish funeral.

CHAPTER LXX

AL-MO'TAMID AND AL-MUWAFFAḲ HIS BROTHER

256-279 A.H. 870-892 A.D.

Transient return of prosperity.

AT this point, we come unexpectedly on a brighter view of the Caliphate, with a fair promise, maintained to the end of the century, of returning vigour and prosperity. The brave example of Al-Muhtadi, however sad its ending, and a succession of able rulers, contributed, no doubt, to this result. But the main cause was the return of the Court in 892 A.D. to Bagdad,[1] where, supported by native feeling, it could better avoid the outrage and curb the influence of Turkish soldiery, while also bringing the Western element to check the Eastern. At any rate, during the next three reigns, there was no repetition of the shameful attacks upon the person of the Caliph, which had made his court at Sāmarrā a byword among the nations.

Mo'tamid, 256 A.H. 870 A.D.

On Al-Muhtadi's deposition, the leading courtiers brought out from confinement at Samarra the eldest surviving son of Al-Mutawakkil, and saluted him as Caliph under the title of Al-Mo'tamid. Musa son of Bogha, engaged with the Khawarij at Al-Ahwāz, hastened back to Court and did obeisance. Indeed, Musa, turning over a new leaf, henceforth proved himself a brave and loyal servant, and some time after was appointed by the Caliph guardian of his son, to whom as heir-apparent the Western half of the empire was entrusted. Al-Mo'tamid himself proved but a poor and helpless monarch. But his brother, Al-Muwaffaḳ, already mentioned under the name of Abu Ahmed, was the real

His brother Muwaffaḳ the real Ruler.

[1] That is, Bagdad on the east bank of the Tigris: the original city was on the west bank.

ruler and stay of the Empire. On the Zenji rebellion bringing danger near to Bagdad, Al-Mo'tamid in alarm summoned him from his government at Mecca. Thenceforward he held the reins, and continued to do so till his death near the close of Al-Mo'tamid's life. A.H. 256-279.

The Zenji insurrection, just noticed, spread terror and outrage for fifteen years all around. The leader, a Persian, gave himself out as a descendant of 'Alī. At the first as such, he set up certain spiritual assumptions; but soon so plainly showed his real colours as an outlaw, that he was called *Al-Khabīth*, that is, the Reprobate. After canvassing in Arabia with little success, he raised at Al-Baṣra the standard of rebellion, proclaimed liberty to the captive, and endless spoil and rapine to all that followed his standard. A text inscribed on his banner was perverted to mean the knell of slavery.[1] Little wonder that slaves, taught by him to insult their masters, flocked in thousands to Al-Khabīth, and Bedawin also in their lust of plunder. Zenj means "Ethiopian,"—the slavish dregs of Africa,—and hence the name of the insurrection. It was in 255 A.H. that they first took the field in force; and in the next two years they spread themselves across the whole delta of the Euphrates, and the banks of the Kārūn as far as Al-Ahwaz. Over and over again they beat back the Imperial troops, and by their fleets dominated both rivers. Emboldened by this success, they, in 257 A.H. (871 A.D.), attacked Al-Baṣra, took it by storm, and for three days subjected the citizens to every kind of outrage. Quarter was at last announced, and the multitude, drawn together by a treacherous proclamation, mercilessly massacred. The Great Mosque was destroyed, and the city set on fire. The Caliph at last, alarmed by their near approach to the capital, summoned Al-Muwaffaḳ to take the field. He carried on the war vigorously against them, but at first with only partial success,—being obliged to suspend operations from time to time from pressing dangers Zenji insurrection, 255 A.H. 869 A.D.

[1] A curious perversion of Sūra ix. 112:—"The Lord hath purchased from Believers their souls (or their own selves) and their substance by the promise of Paradise"; meant by the Prophet as an incitement to fight in the ways of the Lord, but here travestied as teaching that the persons of all believers, having been thus purchased, are thereby redeemed and no longer subject to slavery.

A.H. 256-279.

elsewhere. A similar fortune attended Musa and other generals. Year after year, even under defeat, great bodies of the Zenji invaded Al-'Irak, Khuzistan, and Al-Bahrein, whether as marauding hordes or in regular line, striking terror into the helpless villagers who fled to Bagdad for refuge. Al-Ahwaz was sacked, and Wasi' captured as a centre for their devastating operations. Thus for ten years the miserable land was kept in suffering and alarm. At last Al-Muwaffak, relieved from external foes, concentrated his forces under his own immediate command, and that of his son Al-Mo'tadid. The tide now turned against the servile swarm. They were gradually driven out of Khuzistan and cooped up in the lower delta; but there they continued to hold a secure position, guarded by strong fortresses and the deep canals surrounding them. The contest, which still dragged its length for five years more, is told with wearisome detail. Even after the enemy was driven from their other strongholds, the chief fortress still resisted for three whole years the regular approaches of a siege, intermitted for a season in consequence of Al-Muwaffak being wounded.

Zenji rebellion, 265 A.H. 878 A.D.

Defeat and death of the Zenji leader, 270 A.H. 883 A.D.

Finding the cause hopeless, the rebels began to go over in great numbers to Al-Muwaffak who received them kindly, and even offered the arch-offender pardon, which he insolently rejected. At last the citadel fell, and multitudes of women delivered from captivity were returned to their homes. Al-Khabith, overtaken in his flight, was slain, and as his head was held up before the assembled force, they fell prostrate, giving thanks to heaven for being at last delivered from the cursed Reprobate.[1]

The outlying provinces of the East have now for our history but a secondary interest. The traditional dominance of the court at Bagdad still imparted weight, if nothing more,

[1] The inordinate length of the story and tendency to magnify show what a deep wound this savage and inveterate enemy inflicted on the country surrounding Bagdad. In 267 A.H., 5000 women released from one of the fortresses were sent to Wasit to be distributed to their homes; shortly after we are told that 20,000 captives belonging to the Kufa villages were taken from another citadel. Al-Muwaffak's force is given at 50,000, and we are told that the Zenj were six times that number. With all allowance for the mass of slaves that flocked to the Reprobate, such numbers are clearly fabulous. On this Servile War see Nöldeke, *Sketches of Eastern History*, pp. 146 ff.

to any title derived from it; and the Caliph was everywhere prayed for in the public services, excepting in the case of open enmity. The Ṭāhirids, beaten by the Ṣaffārids, retire from the scene, and are hereafter mentioned only as resident in Bagdad, and holding chief municipal office there. The 'Alid dynasty still retained the districts south-east of the Caspian; but a new enemy arose against them in the Samānid house—a noble family, which held ancient office in Khorāsan, and now aspired to independence. These distant movements, however, and the career of Al-Khūjustani, an adventurer who from 261 to 268 A.H. rose to great power in the East, affected the Caliphate little. But Ya'ḳūb the Coppersmith (Ṣaffār), became a cause of danger. Not content with the various provinces his family had secured in the East, his ambition turned westward, and covering Fars, he asked the Caliph for it. Al-Mo'tamid, offended at the demand, assembled the pilgrims returning eastward, and proclaimed in their ears that he had deposed Ya'ḳūb from Khorasān. Ya'ḳūb hastened to retaliate by an advance not only on the western provinces of Persia, but on Bagdad itself. Rejecting concessions which the Caliph, now alarmed, was ready to make, he crossed the Tigris below the Capital, passed Wāsiṭ, and was already close to Bagdad when, met by Al-Muwaffaḳ, he was routed with great slaughter, the loss of his camp, 10,000 mules with vast spoil, and driven back into his Persian provinces. The last of the Ṭāhirid rulers who, beaten by Ya'ḳūb, had been kept by him as a prisoner, escaped on his defeat, and, welcomed at Bagdad, was there installed as governor. It is curious to note that the Zenji Reprobate, while yet in the field, offered to join Ya'ḳūb after his defeat, in a fresh attack on Bagdad. The offer met this scornful reply:—"Say;—O ye Unbelievers! I worship not that which ye worship; neither do ye worship that which I worship."[1] Some years passed, and a friendly message was again sent by the Caliph to Ya'ḳūb, who still held the western parts of Persia. The grand old warrior received it as he lay on his deathbed, the sword by his side, and a crust with onions as a relish for his frugal meal. Starting up in his couch, he replied to the envoy,—"Speak thus to thy Master. I am sick unto death. If I die, I am

A.H. 256-279.

State of the eastern provinces, 261 A.H. 874 A.D.

Hostilities of Ya'ḳūb the Saffārid, 262 A.H.

265 A.H.

[1] Sūra cix.

A.H. 256-279.

quit of thee, and thou of me; if I live, there is nought betwixt us but this sword that I may take my revenge of thee; or beaten, retire content (pointing to the crust) with this simple fare." He died. 'Amr his brother, succeeding, submitted himself to the Caliph, and was confirmed with every honour, in the east to the farthest bounds of Khorasan and Sind. Some years after things changed again; for Al-Muwaffak, now relieved of domestic as well as external pressure, and seeking to restore the Tāhirid dynasty, had the Saffarids denounced from the pulpits, and meeting 'Amr in the field, drove him from all his western possessions back to Sijistan. Towards the close of the reign we find 'Amr again in favour, and acknowledged as before. But in the end he fell, as we shall see, before the various antagonists who now sprang up in the East and fought for its supremacy. The rise of the Saffarids was the first step towards the recovery of the national independence of Persia.[1]

Ya'kūb's death.

Saffarid dynasty, 271-274 A.H.

Tūlūnid rule in Egypt, 254-270 A.H. 868-883 A.D.

We turn to Egypt, where Ahmed ibn Tūlūn, appointed, as we have seen, Governor of Fostat, in 254 A.H., had gradually assumed independent power over the whole country. A wise and able ruler, the land flourished under his government as it had never done before. The revenues, instead of passing to Bagdad, were expended in public works at home; buildings, canals, and charities were the objects of his care, and a Mosque bearing his name is still the ornament of Cairo; learning was promoted, while a magnificent Court and powerful army maintained the dignity of Egypt without unduly increasing the financial pressure. Ahmed had for a while to fight at home against 'Alid and other pretenders, whom he subdued; and then with like success against Ibrahim the Aghlabid ruler of Kairawan, who, after signal conquests in Sicily, had turned his aspirations eastwards.

262 A.H.

At this point, Al-Muwaffak, jealous of the Tūlūnid's independent attitude, sent Mūsa, with the view of again reducing him to subjection. The Egyptian with his large resources easily repelled the invasion, while Mūsa's army, in want and discontent, mutinied at Ar-Rakka, and after long months of inaction forced him to retrace his way to Al-'Irāk.

[1] On the Saffarid dynasty see Noldeke, *Sketches of Eastern History* pp. 176 ff.

A.H. 256-279.

Aḥmed ibn Ṭūlūn's campaign in Asia Minor and Syria, 264 A.H. 877 A.D.

About this time, the Byzantine court, taking advantage of the Caliph's domestic troubles, was making serious advances in Asia Minor. Tarsus, unfortunate in its governors, allowed the fortress of Lu'lu'a to fall into the enemy's hands. Aḥmed ibn Ṭūlūn had long sought for leave to carry his Egyptian arms against the Greeks, but Al-Muwaffaḳ had scorned the offer. The Caliph, who regarded him with more favour than his brother, now committed the campaign into his hands. Placing his son Khumāraweih in charge at home, Aḥmed gladly seizing the opportunity, passed at once into Syria, which opposed his advance; but easily defeating the governors who came out against him, he took Damascus and Antioch, and advanced upon Tarsus. There he was ill received, and, obliged to return to Syria, left the Greeks to pursue their victories. But he maintained his hold on Syria, and turning his arms eastward took Ḥarrān. While carrying all before him in his farther advance on Mosul, he heard that his son Khumāraweih had left the capital and retired to Barḳa with all the treasure. There the foolish youth sought to found a new kingdom of his own; but warring westward was beaten back by the Aghlabids on Barḳa. He was seized by his father's troops, and carried back to Fusṭāṭ, a miserable spectacle. By command of Aḥmed, his son inflicted with his own hand condign punishment on the advisers who had led him astray. He was then himself beaten with a hundred stripes, after which Aḥmed wept as, with a father's bowels of compassion, he upbraided him for his folly.[1]

268 A.H.

Ibn Ṭūlūn invites the Caliph to to Egypt, 268 A.H.

Meanwhile Lu'lu'a, the freed Memlūk of Aḥmed, had been pursuing the victorious course begun by his Master, and extending the Ṭulūnid rule from Syria to Mosul, when an unexpected turn of affairs occurred. Al-Muwaffaḳ being still in mortal combat with the Zenj, the empire suffered everywhere from the helpless incapacity of his

[1] The scene is told with much pathos. The punishment which Aḥmed made his son inflict on his evil counsellors is, however, so barbarous as to mar the effect altogether; and I have not ventured to translate it into the text. The truant son was commanded to cut off both their hands and their legs, leaving them miserable living trunks. One may hope that these things are exaggerated. But even worse things were in store for wretched Egypt under the Memlūk dynasty.

A.H. 256-279.

brother Al Mo'tamid. The ambitious Ahmed here saw his opportunity. The Caliph, chafing at having only the shadow without the power of sovereignty, was to fly to Egypt, where the Tulunid, his faithful vassal, would secure to him the substantial enjoyment of the throne, and victory over his domineering brother. But he had not calculated on the vigilance of Al-Muwaffak, who, apprised of the plot, caused Al-Mo'tamid to be seized in his flight towards Mosul, and with his chief followers in chains, sent back ignominiously to Samarra. Ahmed, thus foiled, vented his chagrin by dropping Al-Muwaffak's name from the public prayers; and Al-Muwaffak retaliated by obliging Al-Mo'tamid to anathematise his protegé in all the mosques that still acknowledged the Caliphate. Equally unsuccessful was Ahmed's attempt to assume the presidency at the annual pilgrimage; for the officer whom he sent to represent him at Mecca was discomfited by the Imperial troops supported by the Persian pilgrims; and here, too, by the Holy House, the Tulunid was denounced at the public service before the assembled multitude. Worse, however, than all, was the defection of Lu'lu', his general in Syria, who went over to Al-Muwaffak at Wâsit, carrying with him his whole force. There he was received with open arms, and he aided materially in bringing to a close the Zenj rebellion. But a few years after, Lu'lu', despoiled by Al-Muwaffak of his vast riches (they were, Lu'lu'a asserted, his only fault), returned a beggar to Egypt with but one attendant;—an apt example of the instability of the times, and (our annalist adds) just reward of ingratitude towards the master who had treed him.

Mo'tamid forced to return. 269 A.H.

Death of Ahmed ibn Ṭûlûn, xi. 270 A.H. 884 A.D.

Not long after, Ahmed having ruled sixteen years in Egypt, and a considerable period in Syria also, died, and was succeeded by Khumâraweih, an unworthy heir to his father's great name. Between him and the Caliph a struggle followed for several years, for the rule in Syria and Mesopotamia, which, after many battles, left the state of things pretty much as it had been at the beginning.

271 A.H.

The provinces.

Mosul and its surrounding districts, having been long harassed by Khâriji insurrections, and latterly by the encroachment of Egyptian generals, was now for a time regained by the Caliphate. But 'Alid risings continued throughout the whole reign to disturb the Empire. Al-Kûfa

was seized by one of these pretenders, who was defeated after some heavy fighting; this city, however, had now fallen from its pre-eminence, and ceased to be a disturbing element. Medīna was attacked by a force headed also by 'Alid rebels, and was again subjected to such outrage that for four weeks none ventured for prayer into the Mosque of Moḥammad; and the city remained in terror till these unworthy descendants of the Prophet were driven out. A.H. 256-279.

During the early years of this reign, the Kaiser, Basil, taking advantage of the distractions of the Caliphate, made inroads on the Syrian border, and as we have seen seized the fortress Lu'lu'a. In succeeding years, though opposed by the Paulicians who sided with the Arabs, the Greeks obtained other victories, in one of which an Arab general was taken captive, and carried to the Byzantine court. In later years the tide turned, and a series of fields were won by the Ṭūlunid governor of Tarsus, who in the end, however, lost his life, shot by a ball from the walls of a town he was besieging. Hostilities with the Greeks in Asia Minor.

Early in 278 A.H., Al-Muwaffaḳ, while engaged in a campaign towards the North, was seized with elephantiasis, and carried on a litter to Sāmarrā. He had long been the real ruler. Some years previously, Al-Mo'tamid had sought to appoint a Wazīr of his own, but fled across the river when Al-Muwaffaḳ drew near; and so entirely did he succumb as, at his brother's command, even to send the favourite he had but just nominated, to prison. Al-Muwaffaḳ, therefore, when he fell sick, resolved to transmit the substantial authority he possessed to his own son Al-Mo'taḍid. This prince was a favourite at the Capital. On one occasion, claiming the government of Syria, instead of another to which he had been appointed, his father was displeased; and having placed him under arrest, the city was in uproar, fearing for his safety, till he was released. Now a similar feeling was abroad. As Al-Muwaffaḳ's end drew near, his brother Al-Mo'tamid was brought over to Bagdad from Al-Medain, his enforced residence, by the Wazīr; and the populace, apprehending that the Wazīr had gone over to the side of the imbecile Caliph, rose in tumult against him. In point of fact, Al-Mo'taḍid was in some danger; but his friends succeeded in bringing him

Illness of Muwaffaḳ, 278 A.H. 891 A.D.

His son Mo'taḍid.

A.H. 279.

His death.

safely to his father's chamber, by whom, thus upon his deathbed, he was formally invested with the same supreme power which Al-Muwaffak had himself so long held and vigorously used for the maintenance of the Empire. Shortly after, he expired at the age of forty-nine.

Death of Mo'tamid, and succession of Mo'tadid, vii. 279 A.H. Oct. 892 A.D.

Al-Mo'tamid never regained any real power; in fact, he had often, both now and before, to struggle in penury with but a few dinars in his purse. In the year following his brother's death, he was obliged publicly to depose his own son from the succession, and recognise Al-Mo'tadid as heir-apparent. He did not long survive, having thrust himself to death in a night carousal, at the age of fifty years, of which he had been Caliph, though in little more than name, for twenty-three years.

CHAPTER LXXI

AL-MO'TAḌID AND AL-MUKTAFI

279-295 A.H. 892-907 A.D.

AL-MO'TAḌID, already in possession of supreme power, continued as Caliph ably to administer the Government. Egypt returned to her allegiance; for Khumāraweih, tempted by the honour, gave his daughter in marriage to the Caliph with a great dower, and promise of a yearly tribute. He was shortly after murdered in circumstances little creditable to the morality either of himself or of his Court. The country fell into disorder under his young son, who, after a few months' reign, was also assassinated; and another son, Hārūn, who succeeded, suffered things to go from bad to worse.

Mo'taḍid, 279 A.H. 892 A.D.

Egypt.

Khorāsān begins to fade from our view. The rulers, even in the far East, were still glad to get their title accredited from Bagdad. But there was little virtual power beyond the limits of Al-'Irak. The Samanid house, which stood for the independence of the Persian nation, rose on the decay of the Saffarid, whose rule was now confined to Sijistan; and the chief of the latter, 'Amr ibn Leith, taken prisoner by the Samanid, was by him sent to Bagdad; where, after remaining some time in prison, he was at last, by the tacit sign of Al-Mo'taḍid on his deathbed, executed. The 'Alid dynasty, so long dominant in Ṭabaristan, was also swallowed up by the Samanid. The immediate authority of the Caliph reached eastward only as far as Ar-Reiy; and even within that limit the powerful family of Abu Dulaf[1]

Khorāsān. Sāmānid chief beats 'Amr the Saffārid; sends him to Bagdad, 288 A.H.

287 A.H.

[1] The same whose praises, sung by the blind poet, so irritated Al-Ma'mūn. Above, p. 509 *n.*

A.H. 279-295.

had hitherto been more or less independent; it was now, however, reduced by Al-Muktafi, the Caliph's son, so that the west of Persia continued still to acknowledge the Court of Bagdad. In Mesopotamia, the Caliph and his son were long engaged in a campaign against the Khawarij, still rampant from Mosul to Amid. In the end this region, which had long been disturbed, partly by rebel Bedawi bands, partly by the rivalry between Egyptian and Imperial generals, was for the time restored to order.

Mesopotamia.

Mo'tadid's administration.

Al-Mo'tadid was a brave and energetic ruler. He was so tolerant towards the house of 'Ali, that when a heavy largess was sent to them by the 'Abid prince of Tabaristan, he was not displeased, as his predecessors would have been; but only bade that it should be done openly. Towards the Umeiyad race he was not so just. He went, indeed, so far as to have them anathematised in the public prayers. He had even a volume of their misdeeds rehearsed from the pulpit, and forbade all favourable mention of them in debate at the clubs and religious gatherings. Bagdad was scandalised at this treatment; and in the end the Caliph withdrew his abusive book. Al-Mo'tadid was also cruel in his punishments, some of which are not surpassed by those of his predecessors. For example, a Zenji rebel, admitted to pardon, but afterwards found tampering with the army, was bound to a stake and, after being scorched with fire, taken down, beheaded, and the body impaled on the great bridge. The Khariji leader at Mosul, who fell by treachery into his hands, was paraded about Bagdad clothed in a robe of silk (the wearing of which Khawarij denounced as sinful) and then crucified, crying aloud, "The rule shall yet be the Lord's alone, let the unbelievers rage never so much!" And yet another of these Khawarij was "skinned alive," so says our annalist, "as you would skin a sheep."

Muktafi, 289 A.H. 902 A.D.

After a prosperous reign of nearly ten years, Al-Mo'tadid died; and Al-Muktafi, his son by a Turkish slave-girl, succeeded to the throne. In command of Ar-Rakka at the time, he at once returned to the Capital, where he became a favourite of the people from his generosity, and for abolishing his father's subterranean prisons, the terror of Bagdad. During his reign of nearly seven years the Empire was threatened by various dangers which he bravely met and

overcame. Chief was that from the Karāmiṭa (Carmathians), a race of fanatics which had sprung up during the late reign, and of which mention will be made in the following chapter. A.H. 279-295. Carmathians.

In beating back the savage Karmaṭi hordes which spread over Syria and besieged Damascus, the Caliph received substantial aid from the Egyptian army, under command of Moḥammad ibn Suleimān. Afterwards this general, seeing the now helpless state of the Ṭūlūnid government, and the consequent disorder of his country, not only transferred his allegiance to the Caliph, but advanced with a powerful army to reduce Egypt itself, and restore it to the Caliph; while with the same object a fleet from Tarsus entered the Nile. As Moḥammad approached Cairo, most of the leading captains went over to him, and left Hārūn with diminished forces. These again fell out among themselves, and Hārūn, in the attempt to quell the tumult, was killed by an arrow. Egypt, thus restored to the Caliphate, was ravaged by the invading force, and the grand works of the last twenty years destroyed. The Ṭūlūnid family, with all their property, were transported to Bagdad, and the dynasty ceased. Notwithstanding his great services, and the vast treasures he brought with him from Egypt, Moḥammad was cast into prison, and tortured to reveal some part of the spoil he was suspected of keeping back. The banished captains of the old dynasty again returned to Egypt, and set up afresh a rebel government at Fusṭāṭ; but they were beaten, and Egypt finally restored to its allegiance. Egypt restored to the Caliphate, 290 A.H. 903 A.D. Hārūn killed, 292 A.H. 293 A.H.

Mosul was again the scene of serious attack. The Kurds came down from their hill retreats in great multitudes on Nineveh. The government was at the time in the hands of a chief of the Ḥamdān family (founder of that house), Arabs of the Beni Taghlib clan, who had to draw for reinforcements on Bagdad, and with that help pursued the Kurds into Azerbijan, and at last restored order. The Sāmanid ruler of Khorasan was about the same time attacked by countless hordes of Turkomans, and placed in such danger, that, instead of being able to render aid against the Kurds, he sent an urgent appeal for help to Bagdad, which was read out from all the pulpits there, but with small result. Mosul, 293-294 A.H.

A.H. 279 A.D.

War with the Greeks, 285-286 A.H.

Throughout these two reigns hostilities prevailed more or less with the Greeks, who were not slow to take advantage of the exigencies of the Caliphate. In 285 A.H. a Byzantine fleet was set on fire, and 3000 sailors decapitated.[1] But there were reverses also. Tarsus was closely besieged by the Greeks, and the governor taken prisoner. Still worse, Egyptian rebels, to spite the Caliph, induced the Tūlūnid governor of Tarsus to burn the Muslim fleet of fifty vessels at anchor in their port. In consequence the Greeks were able to ravage the coasts at pleasure, both by land and sea, carrying vast numbers away captive. War was kept up with various fortune. Ten golden crosses, each followed by 10,000 men, swept devastation and captivity along the

292 A.H. Muslim shores; while, on the other hand, a Muslim fleet under a renegade Greek, and manned by negroes, ravaged the coast opposite Byzantium. There followed further

294 A.H. fighting, till in the end peace was made and prisoners on either side exchanged or ransomed.

Death of Muktafi, ii. 295 A.H. 907 A.D.

Thus, after a stormy reign of between six and seven years, Al-Muktafi could look round and find the Caliphate more secure than it had been since the days of Al-Mu'tasim. One of his last acts was, on the death of the Sāmānid prince, to recognise the succession of his son in Khorāsān, and forward to him a banner mounted by his own hand. He died at the early age of thirty-three, and left the throne to a minor brother. But, before proceeding with the melancholy sequel of the Caliphate, some account should be given of the Ismailians, who arose about this time and materially influenced the future history of Islām.[2]

[1] So our authorities, though one can hardly believe it.

[2] The annals of the Caliphate from 291 to 320 A.H. (= Nov. 903—Dec. 932 A.D.) are given in the *Continuation of the History of Al-Tabari* by 'Arīb ibn Sa'd of Cordova, edited by De Goeje, Leyden, 1897.

CHAPTER LXXII

ISMAILIANS, CARMATHIANS, AND FĀṬIMIDS

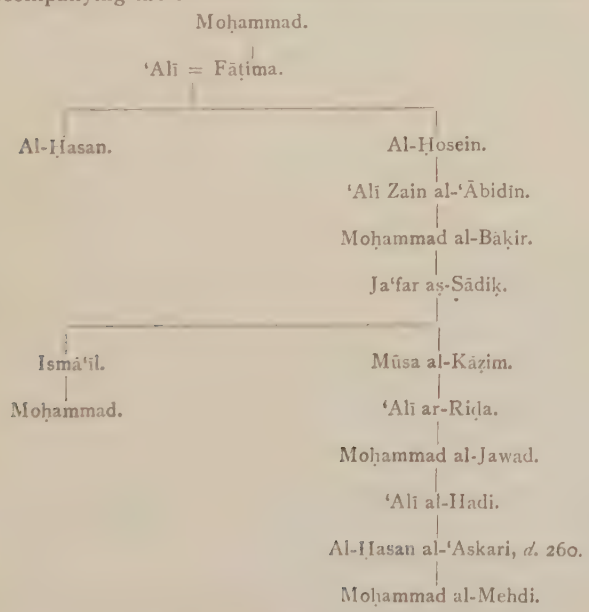
'Alid fanaticism.

Ever since the tragedy of Kerbalā, the Muslim world was exposed, as we have seen, to outbursts of fanaticism in favour of the house of 'Alī. The Persian Shī'a, with its mystic tendencies, stimulated the sentiment, while the decline of the Caliphate, and the disorder prevailing in consequence, offered ready advantage to pretenders. Hence the growing frequency of 'Alid risings. The feelings thus abroad were now to assume concrete and permanent form.

Various mystic sects.

The numerous sects and schisms which developed at this time were all based on the sanctity of the line of 'Alī, and the survival in it of a divine authority. Some held to twelve of the line; others to seven, these being numbers to which singular virtues were ascribed.[1] Schools multiplied all over

[1] The accompanying table shows the descent of the Shī'ite Imāms:



Those who accept seven Imāms make the seventh Ismā'īl or his son

the land in which the mystic faith was quietly and cautiously taught, embracing such recondite doctrines as the formation of the universe by the divine Reason, transmigration of souls, immanence of Divinity in the Mehdi,[1] and the early expectation of his coming. The novice was initiated in such esoteric doctrines, under oath of secrecy, and became henceforward, soul and body, his leader's devotee. The teaching of the Mehdi, it was held, might supersede the Kor'an, the tenets of which were allegorically rendered; and the changes both of dogma and ritual were so strange and sweeping that the Prophet himself would hardly have recognised the system thus evolved as in any respect his own. The superstition spread with marvellous rapidity over the whole East, and along the southern shores of the Mediterranean.

Ismailians. In the latter half of the third century A.H. 873-874 A.D., there arose an enthusiast of this school, 'Abdallah ibn Meimun al-Kaddah of Jerusalem, who propagated a system designed to weld all religions into a universal faith. It was to be the seventh and last religion of the world, under the Seventh in succession from 'Ali—the divine Mehdi, Mohammad son of Isma'il. From his patronymic the faith is named the *Isma'ili*. During the reign of Al-Mo'tadid, a leader of this persuasion opened canvass in Al-'Iraḳ, and gained a great following both there and in surrounding lands. He was nicknamed Karmat (the dwarf), and after Carmathians. him the sectaries are called Karamita or Carmathians; and for a hundred years (about 890-990 A.D.) they spread consternation throughout south-western Asia. He appeared while the Zenj were yet in the field, and offered to join Al-Khabith with 100,000 swords; but unable to adjust the tenets of a common faith, they parted. For some ten years the 'Abbasid government managed to hold its own. Then a leader arose, Zikraweih by name. The Caliph's troops were annihilated near Al-Basra in 900 A.D., and only their

Mohammad. From the former the sect of the Isma'iliya are named; from him the Fatimids claim descent. The twelfth Imam disappeared about 260 A.H. (873 A.D.), and is looked for to return. Hence he is also called Al-Muntaẓar (the Watched for).

[1] "Mehdi," that is the "Guide" or divine Leader of the day, as being in direct descent from 'Ali.

general escaped. His sons, one of whom was called "the Owner of the She-camel" and his brother "the Owner of the Mole" (from a mole on his face which he called his "sign") invaded Syria. The former was killed by naphtha in an attempt to storm Damascus; the latter ravaged Syria, murdering and pillaging wherever he went; and yet, strange to say, he was prayed for in the pulpits of the wretched province as "Commander of the Faithful"; and with him also was a cousin named *Muddaththir*, "the Wrapped up," an epithet of Mohammad.[1] The alarm was so great at Bagdad that, as we have seen, Al-Muktafi sent the Egyptian general Mohammad to attack the fanatic host, himself accompanying the army as far as Ar-Rakka. The Carmathians, after ravaging northern Syria nearly as far as Antioch, were totally beaten, the "Owner of the Mole" with his cousin and some followers escaping into the desert. Discovered there, they were carried to the Caliph at Ar-Rakka, and thence sent to Bagdad, where, paraded on an elephant and camels, they were made a spectacle to the city. Kept in prison till the return of Mohammad with more Carmathian captives, they were all beheaded after their legs and arms had been cut off. For the "Owner of the Mole," a death was reserved of exquisite cruelty. Scourged with two hundred stripes, his hands were cut off; then he was scorched and, when in the agonies of the fire, his head was struck off and raised aloft on a pole, amidst the shouts of the multitude, *Allâhu Akbar*, God is most Great! There were other scenes of the kind, but this may suffice.

Their defeat and terrible punishment.

One marvels at the tenacity of this noxious heresy. Beaten here it suddenly reappears there, scattering havoc and outrage in its track. Men were everywhere in expectation, and mused in their hearts whether this pretender or that were the coming Mehdi. The leaders too often acted from low and corrupt motives, and were followed by marauding Bedawin who, no longer enlisted in the Imperial forces, lusted after rapine and plunder. But apart from unworthy aims of the kind, there must have been some spiritual force behind to hold together such vast masses and nerve them for the dangers, as well as for the spoils, of rebellion.

Marvellous tenacity of these enthusiasts.

[1] Sûra lxxiv. 1.

Renewed outbreak, 292 A.H.

And so another year had hardly passed when—the Imperial arms being engaged in Egypt—outrages were renewed with even greater barbarity than before. Zikraweih, who had for years lain hid in a subterranean dwelling, now wrote to his people that a heavenly messenger had revealed to him the death of his son, and that the Mehdi was on the point of appearing. They were to go forth to war, and on the day of Sacrifice (10th Dhu'l-Hijja) enter Al-Kufa, where thousands would rise and join them. Thereupon Syria, from one end to the other, was subjected to fire and sword and every kind of licence. Urgent appeal was made to Al-Muktafi, who sent his best generals without success against them. Just then Zikraweih emerged from his hiding. He was received with divine honours by the deluded throng and carried veiled upon their shoulders as the Vicegerent of the Almighty. The Carmathians were now filled with such wild enthusiasm that they routed the Caliph's hosts, slaying 15000, and striking terror into the heart of Bagdad. Zikraweih at last formed the diabolical design of lying in wait between Al-Basra and Al-Kufa for the caravans just then returning from pilgrimage. The first escaped, but the village which connived at their deliverance was utterly destroyed. The second was overtaken, and few lived to tell the tale: even the women were slain, excepting those kept for a worse fate.[2] The third was warned to hold on till Imperial succour should come; but the Carmathians choked the wells, arrested help, and fell upon the multitude dying of thirst. Another butchery ensued; the Carmathian women carried water round to see if life was left in any yet; and if anyone gasped for a draught, the *coup de grâce* was given.[2] Twenty thousand were left dead on the fatal camping-ground; and twenty million pieces seized as plunder, part of the Fatimid treasure carried by way of Mecca with the pilgrim caravan for safety. But the days

294 A.H.

Attack on pilgrim caravans.

[1] He quoted as a command from the Mehdi, Sura xx. 61, where Moses appointed the feast-day for his meeting with Pharaoh.

[2] We met with the same savagery on the part of the women in the battle of Al Kadisiya, but then against the infidels. What adds point, if that were possible, to the inhumanity on the present occasion, is that the victims were of their own faith, and were returning from performance of the highest function of the Muslim worship.

of this reprobate were drawing to an end. A Turkish general, Waṣif, sent by the Caliph Al-Muktafi with a great army, after two days' desperate fighting, discomfited the fanatic host and dispersed it with great slaughter. Zikraweih, taken prisoner, died of his wounds before reaching Bagdad, and the populace, eager for a cruel spectacle, had to be satisfied with the sight of his lifeless body. The fragments of the rebel army were pursued into Syria, where they were dispersed by Al-Ḥosein ibn Ḥamdān.

Renewed outbreak, 307 A.H.

In the following reign we come upon even more fearful outbreaks of the savage fanatics who still held the province of Al-Baḥrein. Early in the fourth century, their chief Suleimān was induced to make a diversion in favour of the Fāṭimid ruler in Africa (of whom more below); and thereupon stormed and sacked Al-Baṣra. A few years after, in 311 A.H. (923 A.D.), he surprised that unfortunate city again by night, and for seventeen days made it the scene of fire, and blood, and rapine. It was not till the approach of troops from Bagdad, that the Carmathians retired laden with spoil and multitudes of captives whom they sold as slaves. The pilgrim caravans were again the object of savage attack; successive companies treated with brutal cruelty as before; thousands plundered, slain, or taken captive.* One caravan of 7000 was pursued and scattered close to Al-Kūfa; the city was stormed, and for six days subjected to like treatment as Al-Baṣra. Suleimān had then the insolence to demand the government of Al-Ahwāz, and being refused, spread his followers over Mesopotamia and Al-'Irāḳ. The divine promise of victory inscribed on his white banner[1] waving over the fanatics, nerved them to beat back over and over again the Caliph's armies led by his best generals, and even to threaten the Capital itself. The affrighted inhabitants fled across the river to the eastern quarter, and on one occasion to the hills beyond. Rapine and terror were thus the fate of the unhappy land for three or four years. At last suffering defeat, the fanatic host withdrew into Arabia; but only to renew their horrid outrages at Mecca. The Holy City was given up to plunder; and so little

Attack on Baṣra, and pilgrimage caravans, 312-313 A.H.

Kūfa stormed.

317 A.H.

[1] It had this text as its legend; WE (the Most High) desire to show Our favour unto those who are weak in the land, and make them leaders and heirs (of the kingdom).—Sūra xxviii. 4.

regard shown to the sacred places, that bodies of the slain were cast into the sacred well Zemzem. The Ka'ba itself was robbed of its precious things, and to crown the sacrilege the Black Stone was, in 929 A.D., carried off to Hejer, and not restored for above twenty years. The Fatimid Caliph, whose authority they recognised, now interfered from the West to stay the scandal and ravages of the Carmathians, which hitherto had been of service to him against the Caliphate of Bagdad. Suleiman returned to Hejer, and we hear little more of him. But the Carmathians still survived. Some years afterwards they again attacked
325 A.H. the pilgrims, and plundered Al-Kufa. After this they fell into dissensions; but they must long have retained a strong hold of Syria, for in 360 A.H. we find them joining in a league with the Caliph to oust the Fatimids from that province; and the Fatimids were obliged to appease them by a yearly tribute. Some fifteen or twenty years later they are again mentioned in connection with the struggles that were prolonged for many years in Asia Minor and Egypt; and, strangely enough, it was a Carmathian who ruled in Al-Multan when, in 396 A.H., it was taken by Mahmūd.[1]

Origin of the Fātimid dynasty, 280 A.H.

It will be convenient here to notice another branch of the Isma'ilis from which sprang the Fatimid dynasty of Egypt. The new transcendental doctrine was widely spread in Southern Arabia, and its votaries so grew in power that their leader gained possession of the Yemen and San'a. A propaganda was started amongst the Berbers of North Africa, for which the Idrisid success had prepared the way. One of the missionaries (*dā'i*, pl. *du'āt*) was Abu 'Abdallah, who had been sent out by Mohammad, son of 'Abdallah ibn Meimun, founder of the Isma'ilis. There, following up the canvass of previous missionaries, this emissary played a *rôle* of unexampled and romantic success. He found the Berbers so ready for the call, that he drew vast crowds after him, by their help defeated the Aghlabid dynasty, and after much fighting gained possession of their capital and kingdom. He preached the impending advent of the Mehdi, and to meet the expectation so raised, summoned Sa'id the son of his deceased master Mohammad. Sa'id came, but

[1] On the whole subject see De Goeje, *Carmathes du Bahrain*.

not under his real name. He claimed to be descended from the Imām Ismā'il, and called himself 'Obeidallah. The adventures of this Mehdi in his flight through Egypt and wanderings as a merchant with a caravan to Tripoli, form quite a romance of themselves. Suspected by the Aghlabis, he was cast into prison, and so remained till released by the victorious Abu 'Abdallah, who for a time professed to be in doubt whether 'Obeidallah were the veritable Mehdi or not. At last, however, he placed him on the throne, and himself reaped the not unfrequent fruit of disinterested labours in the founding of a dynasty; for he was assassinated by command of the Monarch who owed to him his throne, but had now become jealous of his influence. Assuming the title, Commander of the Faithful, 'Obeidallah, in virtue of his alleged descent from the Prophet's daughter Fatima, became the *Fāṭimid* Caliph of a kingdom which embraced both the dominions heretofore held by the Aghlabid dynasty, and the nearer districts of the Caliphate bordering on the Mediterranean. Its capital was Al-Mehdiya—near Tunis—the "Africa" of Froissart. The name means "belonging to the Mehdi." He made repeated attempts to gain Egypt also, but was repulsed by Mūnis, Al-Muktadir's commander there. Some fifty years later, however, both Syria and Egypt were conquered by his followers, and the foundations laid firm on the Fatimid anti-Caliphate. A literary duel then opened between Fustat and Bagdad on the purity of 'Obeidallah's descent from 'Ali and Fatima, on which the claims of the Egyptian dynasty rested. The heated debate was maintained long after its political moment had ceased. The Fatimid anti-Caliphate lasted from 909 to 1171 A.D.

297 A.H. 909 A.D.

Fāṭimid dynasty.

306-309 A.H.

358 A.H. 969 AD.

When the Fatimid dynasty had passed away, the Ismā'ili faith was banished from Egypt by Saladin, who was strictly orthodox in his profession. Another branch of the superstition, however, still curiously survives,—that namely of the Druses.[1] This strange sect was established, early in the fifth century, by the impious Fatimid, Al-Hakim, whom the Druses were encouraged to worship as an incarnation of the Deity. Driven from Egypt by his successor, they retired to

Druses, *circa* 400 A.H. 1009 A.D.

[1] *Cf.* De Sacy, *Chrestomathie Arabe*, vol. ii. pp. 191 ff. and *Expose de la Religion des Druzes.*

the heights of the Lebanon, where they still look for the return of their Caliph, the divine Hākim.

Assassins.

About the same time another offset of the faith was established by a Persian fanatic, which, under the title of Assassins,[1] long held in check the princes of the East, and earned for themselves an unenviable fame in the days of the Crusaders. They retired on the invasion of the Mongols, but still survive a small and now an inoffensive sect in the Lebanon and elsewhere.

In the midst of all this strife of parties the orthodox Muslim faith was reasserted about the year 300 A.H. by Abu'l-Hasan al-Ash'ari, who made use of the scholasticism of the Mo'tazila against themselves. The latter gradually disappeared from history, while the teaching of Al-Ash'ari won always wider acknowledgment. The Arabic word for "scholasticism" is *kalam*, the scholastics being the *Mutakallimīn*.

On the other hand the Mo'tazili freethought seemed to spring to life again in the Society of the Ikhwan as-Safa ("Brothers of Purity"), or Encyclopædists, who under the protection of the Shi'a Buweihids, published about the year 970 A.D. some fifty tracts, intended to reconcile Science with Religion, and Islām with Greek philosophy. They followed up the work of Al-Farabi, and led up to that of Ibn Sina (Avicenna), and, transported to the West, they gave rise to the famous disputation of the Nominalists and Realists of the Christian schoolmen.

[1] *Hashishin*, the name that arose from the drug *Hashish* to which they were addicted. They were long the terror of the East for the treacherous use of the dagger, both for the fanatical ends of their sect, and also as hired assassins. The Assassins of Syria have never entirely disappeared. Even at this day they are to be found in the Lebanon. Some representatives of the sect also exist in Persia, and even in Zanzibar; but since the thirteenth century they have become inoffensive. —*Enc. Britt.* 9th ed. vol. xvi. p. 594.

CHAPTER LXXIII

AL-MUḳTADIR, AL-ḲĀHIR, AND AR-RĀḌI

295-329 A.H. 907-940 A.D.[1]

WE return to the story of the Caliphate.

Renewed decadence of the Caliphate.

The stand made during the last three reigns to stay its downward progress at last came to an end. There remains little now to tell, but a weary and ungrateful history of weakness, misfortune, cruelty, and shame. And there being nothing either attractive or instructive, the remainder will be briefly told. At the same time many names famous in the world of literature and science fall under this and the preceding reigns. Among the best known are: Isḥāḳ ibn Ḥonein ibn Isḥāḳ, the physician and translator of Greek philosophical works into Arabic (*d.* 911 A.D.): Abu Bekr ibn Zakariya ar-Rāzi, best known in Europe as "Rhazes" (*d.* 923 or 932 A.D.); Al-Battāni, the astronomer, "Albategnius" (*d.* 929 A.D.); and the families of Thabit ibn Ḳurra of Ḥarrān and of Bokht-Yishū'.

Muḳtadir, 295 A.H. 907 A.D.

Al-Muktafi, being confined for several months to his sick-bed, intrigue had been for some time busy as to his successor. The choice lay between his minor brother whom the Caliph himself favoured, and a son of Al-Mo'tazz. The Wazir, hoping for the more thorough subservience of the minor, carried his appointment. Though but thirteen years of age, this boy assumed the title of Al-Muḳtadir, "Mighty by the help of the Lord," a sad misnomer; for even in manhood he was but a weak voluptuary in the hands of women of the Court, and of their favourites. His five-and-twenty years'

[1] The great history of Ṭabari comes to an end at the year 302 A.H. = 914-915 A.D. From this point the best authorities are Ibn al-Athir (*d.* 1232-1233 A.D.) and the lately published Ibn Miskawaih (*d.* 1030 A.D.).

A.H. 295-329.

reign is the constant record of his thirteen Wazirs, one rising on the fall, or on the assassination, of another. Few weeks elapsed before the first Wazir was murdered by conspirators who placed Ibn al-Mo'tazz upon the throne. But Munis, commander-in-chief, stood by his boyish Sovereign; and the Pretender, obtaining no support in the city, was with his followers slain.

War with Greeks, who sought armistice, 305 A.H. 917 A.D.

There had been war now for some years between the Muslims and the Greeks in Asia, with heavy loss for the most part on the side of the Muslims, of whom great numbers were taken prisoners. The Byzantine frontier, however, began to be threatened by Bulgarian hordes; and so the Empress Zoe sent two ambassadors to Baghdad with the view of securing an armistice, and arranging for the ransom of the Muslim prisoners. The embassy was graciously received, and peace restored.[1] Munis was deputed to pacify the border, and carried with him a sum of 130,000 golden pieces for the freedom of the captives. All this only added to the disorder of the city. The people, angry at the success of the "Infidels" in Asia Minor and at similar losses in Persia, cast it in the Caliph's teeth that he cared for none of these things, but, instead of seeking to restore the prestige of Islam, passed his days and nights with slave-girls and musicians. Uttering such reproaches, they threw stones at the Imam, as in the Friday service he named the Caliph in the public prayers.

Disorders in the city, 317 A.H.

Some twelve years later, Al-Muktadir was a second time subjected to the indignity of deposition. The leading courtiers having conspired against him, he was forced to abdicate in favour of his brother Al-Kahir; but, after a scene of rioting and plunder, and loss of thousands of lives, the conspirators found that they were not supported by the

[1] There are traditional accounts of the marvellous grandeur of the reception, and fairy-tales of its surrounding:—curtains of gold, gorgeous carpets, thousands of eunuchs, pages, elephants, lions, etc. The description also of a marvellous tree, with branches of gold, and birds of silver. "The leaves of various colours move as the wind blows, while the birds pipe and sing." Of course there is fancy in the tale, but it also shows that in proportion as the ruler and his retinue fell from virtue into depravity and vice, the surroundings would rise into every kind of wanton grandeur and excess.—See *R. Asiatic Society's Journal*, January 1897, pp. 35-45.

troops; and so Al-Muḳtadir, who had been kept in safety by Munis, was again placed upon the throne. The finances, always straitened, fell after this outbreak into so wretched a state that, spite of ruthless confiscation and resumption, nothing was left with which to pay the city guards. A quarrel, stimulated by their rival demands, arose between the cavalry and infantry; the latter worsted, were most of them massacred, and the rest driven from the city. Things became so bad that Munis, thwarted by the Wazir of the day in all attempts at reform, retired, and with his followers took up his residence at Mosul. Al-Muḳtadir at last invited Munis to return, who loyally answered the call. But the foolish Caliph, as he drew near to Bagdad, was persuaded by his favourites, who dreaded the return of the Caliph's faithful supporter, to change his mind, and instead of welcoming him as his friend, to go forth with his guards against him. And so, clad in the Prophet's mantle, girt about with the sword Dhu'l-Faḳār, and holding the royal sceptre, the wretched Muḳtadir issued from his palace, and was slain outside the city gate.

A.H. 295-329.

318 A.H.

Muḳtadir's death, 320 A.H.

The long reign of this miserable Caliph had brought the Empire to the lowest ebb. External losses were of secondary moment; though even so, Africa was lost, and Egypt nearly. Mosul, under chiefs of the Ḥamdān line, had thrown off its dependence, and the Greeks could make raids at pleasure on the helpless border. Yet in the East there still was kept up a formal recognition of the Caliphate, even by those who virtually claimed their independence; and nearer home, the terrible Carmathians had been for the time put down. In Bagdad, Al-Muḳtadir, the mere tool of a depraved and venal court, was at the mercy of foreign guards, which, commanded for the most part by Turkish and other officers of strange descent, were ever and anon breaking out into rebellion. Thus, abject and reduced, twice dethroned, and at the last slain in opposing a loyal officer whom he had called to his support, it is no wonder that the prestige which his immediate predecessors had regained was lost, and that the throne became again the object of contempt at home, and a tempting prize for attack from abroad. The people also were demoralised. Bagdad was no longer the centre

Wretched degradation of the Caliphate under Muḳtadir.

A.H. 295-329.

of a vigorous population that might defend, and at times even govern, themselves. Contending in wild factions, they could redden the streets with blood, as they fought now over the interpretation of a text, and now, with the Ḥanbalis rising in tumult over the remains of the great Ṭabari, denounce him as a heretic, and refuse his remains the rites of burial.[1] But as for manhood, virtue, and power, these had altogether vanished.

Ḳahir, 320 A.H. 932 A.D.

On the death of Al-Muḳtadir, the loyal Mūnis, whose only object in returning had been to restore security to his master, now wished to place his son upon the throne. But the courtiers, afraid that he might revenge his father's death upon them, chose rather in his stead the late Caliph's brother Al-Ḳahir, already mentioned as having for a few days held the Caliphate; and he proved a more miserable ruler even than Al-Muḳtadir. With an outward affectation of piety, he went to every excess of cruelty and extortion. He even tortured the mother of Al-Muḳtadir and his sons and favourites, to squeeze from them the treasures amassed during the late reign. Many fled from the tyrant's grasp. Conspiracies were rife at Court; and to anticipate the

321 A.H.

machinations of the treacherous Caliph, Mūnis and his friends endeavoured to place him under restraint, and failing in the attempt, resolved to dethrone him. The plot, however, came to light; and the opposite faction having gained over the guards by bribes, imprisoned the conspirators, and appointed a new generalissimo (Amir al-Umara, as he was now called) in Mūnis' room. The Caliph caused his wretched nephew, who was to have

Mūnis beheaded.

succeeded, to be immured alive; and the faithful Mūnis with his followers was, on the guards rising in his favour, beheaded. Al-Ḳahir, thus relieved from immediate danger, broke out into such tyranny, equally against friend and foe,

[1] The verse that caused the uproar was simple enough:—"Peradventure the Lord will raise thee up unto a noble place." The contention of the Ḥanbalis was that Moḥammad was here promised a place near the throne in heaven; while the others held that it referred to the rank of intercessor, and hence the heated strife. As to the historian Ṭabari, the Ḥanbalis were angry, because in his history he had not noticed Ibn Ḥanbal among the great jurists of Islam. Aṭ-Ṭabari, *b.* 224 A.H.; *d.* 310 A.H. His friends had to bury him secretly by night in his own house.

as to render his rule unbearable. A fresh conspiracy was set on foot, and the besotted Caliph, overcome at night by wine, was attacked in his palace. Refusing to abdicate, his eyes were blinded, and he was cast into prison. Eleven years after he was liberated, and might then be seen led about a wretched mendicant in beggar's dress and wooden sandals;—sad contrast to his high-sounding title, *Al-Ḳāhir bi'llāhi*, "Victorious by the grace of God," and meet type of the fallen Caliphate. A.H. 295-329. Ḳāhir deposed and blinded, 322 A.H. 934 A.D.

The seven years' reign of Ar-Rāḍi son of Al-Muḳtadir, who followed, was but a succession of misfortune. Praised for his piety, he became the mere tool of the chief minister of the day. It would be unprofitable to detail the intrigues of his Court, or the treachery by which even the few provinces still remaining around the Capital fell into the hands of his professed servants. The authority of the Caliph, indeed, excepting in an uncertain and intermittent way, extended hardly beyond the precincts of the city. After one Wazir had been imprisoned by his enemies, and another had absconded in disgrace, Ar-Rāḍi, being without resources, fell into the hands of an able but cruel ruler, Ibn Raiḳ, for whom he created the post of Amīr al-Umara (Amir of the Amīrs), who held so absolutely the reins of government that his name was conjoined with the Caliph's in the public prayers. To enable him to combat the provincial governors, who began to raise their heads in revolt all around, Ibn Raiḳ called to his aid Bajkam, a chief from the Deilem, with his Turkish horde. But after two years the intrigues and machinations of this wretched band became intolerable. Rāḍi, 322 A.H. 934 A.D.

The cruelties perpetrated are hardly credible. Becoming jealous of Bajkam, Ibn Raiḳ designed to supplant him; on which Bajkam, hastening from his camp, entered the city in force. Ibn Raiḳ disappeared; and in his room Bajkam became Amir al-Umara. Taking the Caliph in his train, he next year attacked the Ḥamdanid prince at Mosul, and gained advantage over him. But in his absence Ibn Raiḳ, emerging from hiding at the head of a body of Carmathians,—for these were now drafted into the Caliph's army,—seized the Capital. This obliged Bajkam to hurry back, and leave the Ḥamdānids independent as Bajkam, 326 A.H. 327 A.H. 328 A.H.

A.H. 295-329.

before. Indeed, it was only to them that the Caliphate now owed the defence of the northern border, which otherwise would have been at the mercy of Grecian inroad. Ibn Raik, on the approach of Bajkam, tendered submission, and receiving pardon, was given the government of Syria and Northern Mesopotamia. But for these he had to contend with Ibn Toghj, the governor of Egypt and founder of the Ikhshidid dynasty. Like others, appointed from Bagdad to the charge of Egypt, this officer had set up as independent sovereign, and ruled there, himself and his successors, for a quarter of a century.[1] After some fighting Ibn Raik was able to come to terms with the Ikhshidid, and so retained his command in the north.

Ikhshidid dynasty in Egypt, 321-350 A.H.

Rise of the Buweihids, 322 A.H. 934 A.D.

A new enemy had meanwhile appeared in the East,—the Persian Shi'ite house of Buweih—which in a few years was to be supreme in Bagdad. The Buweihids were sons of Buweih, a prince in the hill-country of the Deilem, and leader of a Turkish horde, engaged now on one side and now on the other, in the wars between the Sámánids and the 'Alid rulers on the Caspian shore. Freed at last from such service, the sons, tempted like other adventurers of the day, turned their arms southward, and took possession of Fars. Bajkam, alarmed at their progress, now took the field, and was on the point of gaining advantage over them, when he had to hurry back because of the treachery of one of his captains, who in his absence threatened Bagdad. And so the Buweihids were left for a time, to consolidate their conquests all around.

327-328 A.H.

Fanaticism rife at Bagdad.

Regarding Bagdad during this reign, we are chiefly told of the heated outburst of fanaticism and intolerance that still prevailed. The Hanbalis, supported by popular sentiment, carried things with a high hand. Forcing their way into private dwellings, they overthrew everything not in strict conformity with their tenets, emptied vessels of wine wherever found, broke in pieces musical instruments, pried into the details of trade and commerce, and set up in fact a kind of inquisition. Thus a professor of the Shi'a creed, for holding transmigration, was impaled and eventually burned alive. A famous doctor also was badly handled for

[1] *Ikhshid* was the title of the princes of Ferghána, one of whom took service under Al-Mo'tasim, and was grandfather of Ibn Toghj.

affirming some various readings of the Ḳor'ān, of no apparent moment in themselves; and, notwithstanding that he submitted written recantation, had to fly Bagdad lest he should be torn in pieces by the angry mob. A.H. 295-329.

Death of Rāḍi, 329 A.H. 940 A.D.

Ar-Raḍi died at the age of thirty-three. He is commonly spoken of as the last of the real Caliphs;—the last, our annalist tells us, to deliver orations at the Friday service, hold assemblies to discuss with philosophers and divines the questions of the day, or take counsel on the affairs of State; the last to distribute largess among the needy, or interpose to temper the severity of cruel officers. And yet, with all this, he was the mere dependent of another. To outward appearance, indeed,—in the weekly presidency at the Great Mosque; in the formal, though it might be but empty, sanctioning of successions in the executive; and in the semblance of a certain courtly ceremonial,—he might still be taken for the Caliph. But beyond the shadow, there was little left at home. And abroad, even less. The East was gone; Africa and Egypt also, with great part of Syria and Mesopotamia; Mosul independent; Arabia held by Carmathians and native chieftains; even Al-Baṣra and Wasiṭ in revolt. The advance of the Greeks was stayed only by the brave Ḥamdanid prince Seif ed-Daula (Sword of the Dynasty), the friend of Al-Mutanebbi. What was there but the Capital; and there, how little!

Rāḍi's poetry.

Ar-Raḍi was the last of the Caliphs whose poetry has been preserved. The remains, both in sentiment and cadence, are of a high order. "In them," Weil writes, "Ar-Raḍi gives expression to deep religious feeling, and to his sense of the instability of human greatness, and the transitoriness of all things here below;—sentiments of which the tale of his Successor, and indeed his own surroundings, offer so apt an illustration."

Decay of Kūfa.

Al-Kūfa, as we have seen, was no longer a source either of danger or of material support. Gradually decaying ever since the transfer of the court to Bagdad, it had lost the power to disturb by its factious outbreaks the affairs of State, and, in point of fact, is seldom mentioned now.

CHAPTER LXXIV

AL-MUTTAḲI AND AL-MUSTAKFI

329-334 A.H. 941-946 A.D.

Muttaḳi, 329 A.H. 941 A.D.

BAJKAM, Amir al-Umara, was at the time of Ar-Radi's death engaged in a campaign against Al-Baridi, a Persian chieftain, who had already held the office of Wazir, but, like others, had since set himself up as independent ruler of an adjacent province, and was now even threatening Al-Medain. Of such little moment had the Caliphate become, that Bajkam, on receiving tidings of Ar-Radi's death, contented himself with despatching to Bagdad his secretary, who assembled the chief men as well of 'Alid as of 'Abbasid descent, to elect a successor. The choice fell on the deceased Caliph's brother Al-Muttaḳi, who assumed the office after it had been some days vacant; and whose first act was to send a banner and dress of honour to Bajkam, a needless confirmation of his rank.

Death of Bajkam.

Bajkam routed Al-Baridi, but before returning to Wasit, where he now held his court, went out on a hunting party, and met his death at the hands of a band of marauding Kurds. The wretched Capital became the scene of renewed anarchy. The Deilem troops fell out with the Turks, and going over to Al-Baridi, enabled him to retake Wasit and enter Bagdad as Amir al-Umara. Fresh disturbances breaking out, he was obliged after ruling for a few weeks to fly, and was succeeded by Kurtekin, a Deilemi chief. His tyranny, however, was so intolerable that Ibn Raik, then governor of Syria, at the Caliph's call, hastened to the Capital, and expelling Kurtekin, assumed supreme control. But Al-Baridi had meanwhile repossessed himself of Wasit, and gaining over

the Turkish mercenaries again attacked Bagdad, on which Ibn Rāiḳ persuaded the Caliph to fly with him to Mosul. Al-Muttaḳi was handsomely welcomed there by the Ḥamdānid princes, who organised a campaign to restore him to the Capital. But their ends were purely selfish; and so, regarding Ibn Rāiḳ as in their way, they assassinated him, and having added his Syrian government to their own, turned their ambition towards Bagdad. And thus it came to pass that before the close of the year, the Ḥamdānid chief, with the title of Nāṣir ad-Daula, advanced on Bagdad with the Caliph in his train, and after driving out Al-Barīdi, entered it in state.

A.H. 329-334.

Flies to Mosul, 330 A.H.

But however powerful the Ḥamdānid chiefs were at home amongst their Arab brethren, and splendid their victories over the Greeks, they found it a different thing to rule at Bagdad. Arabs were no longer able to contend with the wild elements that dominated there. The foreign mercenaries, rank and file as well as leaders, had for long years cast off subservience and respect for Arabian chiefs; and even in the field, the Arab soldiery, discountenanced and cast aside, could nowhere hold their own against the well-organised Turkish forces. And so in less than a year, the Ḥamdānid chieftains had to return to Mosul; for a Turkish general called Tūzūn,[1] having beaten Al-Barīdi at Al-Baṣra, entered Bagdad in triumph, and was saluted Amīr al-Umarā. But fresh proceedings against his enemy obliged Tūzun to quit the Capital; and during his absence a conspiracy broke out which placed the Caliph in danger, and obliged him again to appeal to the Ḥamdānid prince for help. Troops sent in response enabled him to escape; he fled to Mosul and thence to Naṣibin. Shortly after, peace being restored between Tūzūn and the Ḥamdānid chiefs, Al-Muttaḳi took up his residence at Ar-Raḳḳa,—a wretched fugitive in the city which had so often been the proud Court of his illustrious ancestors.

Ḥamdānid princes' short rule at Bagdad.

Tūzūn, 331 A.H. 943 A.D.

Muttaḳi escapes to Raḳḳa, 332 A.H. 944 A.D.

There, under the surveillance of a Ḥamdānid prince, Al-Muttaḳi, who had now been many months a refugee from his Capital, bethought him of the Ikhshidid, his former governor of Egypt, and now its ruler. Appealed to, the Ikhshidid hastened to the Caliph, and offering splendid

Visited by the Ikhshīdid.

[1] By Weil, *Turun.*

A.H. 329-334.

presents with humble homage, besought him to return with him to Egypt, warning him at the same time to beware of Tuzun. But neither he nor the Hamdanid princes had other object in offering the Caliph an asylum, than by possession of his person to gain a title to the contested province of Syria. And so Al-Muttaki distrusting both, threw himself, the warning notwithstanding, into the hands of Tuzun, who swore with the most sacred oaths that he would render true and faithful service. Spite of it all, he soon after deposed him from the Caliphate, and had his sight destroyed.

Deposed and blinded, 333 A.H. 944 A.D.

Mustakfi.

The same day, Tuzun installed the blinded Caliph's brother as his successor, with the title of Al-Mustakfi, *For whom the Lord sufficeth*. The Buweihid columns beginning now to hover about the Capital as vultures over their prey, Tuzūn, with the Caliph in his train, marched out to Wasit and discomfited them. The tribute due from Mosul being withheld, and the treasury in straits, Tuzun, again carrying the Caliph with him, marched against the Hamdanids; but, friendly relations re-established, he returned. Soon after, Tuzūn died, and was succeeded by Abu Ja'far, one of his generals. Bagdad now fell into a fearful state of distress. Supplies, stayed by the enemies all round, no longer reached the markets, and people were reduced to eat dogs and cats and even offal. Pillage and rapine rife, the mob were driven by starvation to plunder the shops of their remaining stores. Multitudes fled the city for Al-Basra or elsewhere, dying in great numbers from want and weakness by the way. Abu Ja'far at last, finding himself unable to control affairs, besought the aid of Nasir ad-Daula from Mosul; even offering, if he would come, to vacate in his favour the supreme command. But the Hamdanid arms were at the moment engaged on one hand with the Russians in Azerbijan, and on the other with the Ikhshidids in Syria. Just then the governor of Wasit surrendered that citadel to the chief of the Buweihids, and joining him marched on Bagdad. Terror reigned in the city. Abu Ja'far and the Caliph fled into hiding; but relieved of the Turkish garrison, which to escape the approaching conqueror evacuated the city and marched off to Mosul, both reappeared. The Caliph then received,

333 A.H. 945 A.D.

334 A.H.

with outward expressions of satisfaction, the secretary whom the Buweihid chief sent on before him to make terms of peace. He also expressed himself ready to embrace the conqueror, and confirm his title to all the surrounding districts which he had overrun. Invited thus, Mo'izz ad-Daula entered Bagdad, and under the title of Amīr al-Umara[1] assumed the supreme command. The Caliph tendered,—as how could he else?—an abject submission to the Amir, whose name, in addition to Al-Mustakfi's, was now by his command stamped upon the coinage, and recited as that of sovereign in the public prayers. In fact he gave in all round. It was all in vain. Mo'izz ad-Daula feared the Caliph as a creature of the Turks, whose return from Mosul he might at any time invite. There may have been cause. At anyrate, he took offence at an entertainment given by the chief lady of the Caliph's *ḥarīm* to the leaders of the Deilemis and Turks still remaining in the city, as if meant to gain them over to the Caliph's cause. Al-Mustakfi in vain excused himself as unconcerned with the feast. Three weeks followed without warning, when the Amir, having arranged for the reception of an embassy from the East at the Caliph's palace, seated himself by his side, with his retinue in waiting. Suddenly two Deilemi chiefs rushed forward and offered to shake the Caliph's hand, who gave it, suspecting nothing. Catching hold, and throwing his turban round his neck, they dragged him by it to the Amir's palace where (common fate now of the dethroned Caliphs, for Al-Muttaki and Al-Kāhir still survived in darkness) he was deprived of sight. He had been Caliph for little over a year. The city rose in tumult, and the Caliph's palace was plundered till but the bare walls remained. The tyrant had the lady's tongue cut out who had organised the hateful entertainment.

A.H. 329-334.

Buweihid Amīr assumes rule of Bagdad, Rabī' ii., 334 A.H. 945 A.D.

Mustakfi deposed and blinded, Jumad ii., 334 A.H. 946 A.D.

The fallen state of the Caliphate has made it no longer needful to notice passing events elsewhere, in the shaping of which the Caliph could have but little or no hand now. A solitary instance we find in which the authority of Al-Muttaki was invoked in a matter which, spiritual in itself, led to an important result. In the year 332 A.H.,

[1] It is said they were the first to be called *Sultan*, but on their coins they style themselves Amīr or Melik only.

A.H. 329-334.

Edessa saved by giving up a relic.

the Greeks carried their inroads so far as to beleaguer Edessa. The only hope of saving it was to surrender the precious relic, called *our Saviour's napkin*, treasured in the Edessa cathedral; which obtained, the Greeks would then retire. The lawfulness of its surrender was debated; and at last referred for decision to the Caliph, who summoned a court of jurists and doctors of the law. Permission was given, and the cession of the relic not only saved Edessa, but purchased liberty to a great multitude of Muslim prisoners.

CHAPTER LXXV

THE BUWEIHID DYNASTY. THE CALIPHS AL-MUṬĪʿ, AṬ-ṬĀIʿ, AL-ḲĀDIR, AND AL-ḲĀIM

334-447 A.H. 946-1055 A.D.

Buweihid dynasty, 334-447 A.H.

THE Buweihids had every advantage on their side. Borne along by a brave Deilemi following, trained on the south-east shore of the Caspian in protracted warfare, they spread rapidly over the provinces to the east of Bagdad, and at last, as we have seen, entered in triumph the Capital itself, distracted as it was by the rivalries of Turkish captains, wild licence of the soldiery, misrule, anarchy, and want. The only adversary at all likely to oppose them was the Ḥamdānid house of Mosul, which without much difficulty could be held in check. And so the Buweihids maintained their hold on Bagdad over one hundred years. But their rule was weakened by family quarrels, and by the Shi'a tendencies of the race. For the Deilemi troops as well as their masters had imbibed those doctrines on the Caspian shore from the 'Alid rulers under whom they served; while the Turkish soldiery, as well as the populace of Bagdad, were devoted to the orthodox faith. The city was thus continually rent by dissensions ending in outbursts of violence between the two factions, which eventually paved the way for the fall of the Buweihids and the entrance of the Seljūḳ conquerors.

Position of Caliphate under it.

The material position of the Caliphs throughout the Buweihid reign was at its lowest ebb. Abject dependents, they were often carried in their master's train while fighting at a distance from the Capital. So inclined, moreover, was Mo'izz ad-Daula (strengthener of the dynasty), the first Buweihid prince, to the Shi'a faith, that he was only

A.H. 334-363. prevented from raising to the Caliphate a scion of the house of 'Ali by alarm for his own safety, and fear of rebellion, not in the capital alone, but all around. For the Caliphate of Bagdad, on its spiritual side, was still recognised throughout the Muslim world wherever the orthodox faith prevailed, excepting always Spain. The Fatimid Caliphs, on the other hand, claimed spiritual supremacy not only in Egypt, but, as Shi'a, contested the pulpits of Syria also, and on one occasion even those of Bagdad. In the East the spiritual dominance varied, but, Persia and the Deilem excepted, the balance clearly favoured orthodoxy. The Turkomans were staunch Sunnis. The great Mahmûd, of Eastern fame, held always a friendly attitude towards the Caliphs, and his splendid victories in the Indian Empire were accordingly announced from the pulpits of Bagdad in grateful and glowing terms. The pages of our annalists are now almost entirely occupied with the political events of the day, in the guidance of which the Caliphs had seldom any concern, and which therefore need no mention here. We shall notice only the few occasions on which we hear them spoken of.

Muti' 334-363 A.H. 946-974 A.D.

The next Caliph, son of Al-Muktafir, called Al-Muti' or *Obedient to the Lord*, had long aspired to the office. Between him and Al-Mustakfi bitter enmity existed, which led him to retire into hiding. When the Buweihids entered Bagdad, he came forth from his retirement, and, establishing himself at the new Court, by his sinister influence contributed to his cousin's fall. When this occurred, and he succeeded to the Caliphate, the Amir made over his cousin to him; and it was while under his custody that the wretched Al-Mustakfi had his eyes put out. But neither did Al-Muti' gain much by his subserviency to the new rulers. He was no longer allowed a voice in nominating the Wazir. A mere pittance doled out for his support, the office was shorn of every token of respect and dignity. Shi'a observances were set up, such as public mourning on the anniversary of Al-Hosein's death, and rejoicing on that of the Prophet's supposed testimony in 'Ali's favour.[1] On one occasion they went so far as to post

[1] Namely, 18th Dhu'l-Hijja. The received tradition is that on that day, coming home from the Farewell Pilgrimage, Mohammad gathered his followers at the pool Khumm, and addressed them on their various

upon the various mosques sheets inscribed with malediction of the early Caliphs, and even of 'Āisha, Moḥammad's favourite spouse. The city was exasperated by the insult, and the placards torn down by the infuriated mob. Such outbursts occurred from time to time; and after one of them, the Caliph, who had held office for nearly thirty years, and now suffered from paralysis, was forced to abdicate in favour of Aṭ-Ṭāi' his son.

A.H. 334-447.

Muṭī' abdicates.

During the Caliphate of Aṭ-Ṭāi', of whom personally, and of his official life, we hear next to nothing, Syria was torn by contending factions—Fāṭimid, Turkish, and Carmathian; while the Buweihid house was split up into parties which fell to fighting among themselves. After holding the office seventeen years, Aṭ-Ṭāi' was deposed and cast into durance, with the view of gaining his property which was coveted by the Buweihid ruler.

Ṭāi', 363-381 A.H. 974-991 A.D.

In place of the deposed Caliph, his cousin Al-Ḳādir, grandson of Al-Muḳtadir, was chosen. Banished from the Capital for designs upon the Caliphate, he was now recalled and appointed to the office he had long desired, and which he was destined to hold for two score years. It was during his Caliphate that Maḥmūd of Ghazna arose, threatening the West; and but for the dissensions that broke out in the family upon his death, the Buweihid kingdom, paralysed by internecine war, would have been swallowed up by hordes of Turkomans. Of Al-Ḳādir there is hardly anything told, excepting that he succeeded in establishing an orthodox doctor as supreme judge, while the Buweihid was content with a Shi'a *Naḳīb*, or descendant of 'Ali, to determine cases for that sect. He died eighty-seven years of age, and was succeeded by his son.

Ḳādir, 381-422 A.H. 991-1031 A.D.

During the first half of Al-Ḳaim's long reign, hardly a day passed in the unfortunate Capital without tumult and

obligations. Referring to 'Ali, he said,—"Whosoever loveth me, will choose 'Ali also for his *Friend*. The Lord be with them that support him, and forsake them that oppose him." 'Ali had just been appointed to command in the Yemen, to the discontent of many, and to stop their murmuring this was said. The word *maulà* signifies both "friend" and "master," and the Shi'a make the most of it in this latter sense. 'Ali himself referred to the words as in his favour, when, as Caliph at Al-Kūfa, he was contending with Mu'āwiya.

A.H. 334-447.

bloodshed between the opposing factions still embittered by religious hate. Frequently the city was left without a ruler, the Buweihid being often obliged to fly for safety from his Capital. Meanwhile the Seljuk house arose; and Toghril Beg, with countless hordes issuing from the east, overran Syria and Armenia. At last he cast an eye upon Baghdad. It was at a moment when the city was in the last throes of violence and fanaticism. The chief officers also were at variance with one another. The Deilemi captain Al-Basasiri accused the Wazir of making overtures to the Seljuks; while the Wazir accused Al-Basasiri of seeking to supplant the Caliph by the Egyptian anti-Caliph. The populace rose against Al-Basasiri, and the Buweihid prince, Melik Rahim, at the Caliph's entreaty, sent him away in exile. Just then Toghril Beg, under cover of intended pilgrimage to Mecca, entered Al-'Irak with a heavy force, and assuring the Caliph of pacific views and all subservience to his authority, begged permission to visit the Capital. The Turks and Buweihids were averse; but the Caliph himself was only too glad to give him leave. On this the great Conqueror was acknowledged as Sultan by the Caliph in the public prayers; and a few days after, Toghril Beg himself,—having sworn to be true not only to the Caliph, but also to the Buweihid, Melik Rahim, made his entry into the Capital, where he was well received both by chiefs and people.

Rahim, 422-467 A.H. 1031-1075 A.D.

Entry of the Seljuks, 447 A.H. 1055 A.D.

During this period literature, especially Persian literature, flourished under the patronage of the Buweihids. The philosopher Al-Farabi, of Turkish descent, died in 950 A.D.; Al-Mutanebbi, acknowledged in the East as the greatest of Arabic poets, and himself an Arab, in 965 A.D.; Al-Khwarizmi (from whose name our word "logarithm" is derived) in 992 A.D.; and the greatest of all, Al-Hosain ibn 'Abdallah ibn Sinā (Avicenna) in 1037 A.D.

CHAPTER LXXVI

BAGDAD UNDER THE SELJŪḲS

447-575 A.H. 1055-1180 A.D.

Toghril Beg at Bagdad, 447 A.H. 1055 A.D.

Toghril Beg was in no haste to leave Bagdad, and it was not long before he found, in a riot of the populace against his wild troops, excuse for casting Melik Raḥim into prison, and assuming in his own hands the government of the city. The Deilemi soldiers were at once disbanded. Quitting Al-'Irāḳ they rallied round Al-Basāsiri, who had joined the Fāṭimid cause in Syria, and who soon waxed strong enough to rout a column of the Seljuḳ forces. Alarmed at the tidings, Toghril, after having rested a year in Bagdad, during which the Caliph in vain besought him to rid the city of his Turkish hordes, set out on a campaign to Naṣibin and Mosul. Returning victorious, he was met by the Caliph with crowns and dresses of honour, and saluted as "Emperor of the East and of the West." But in the following year, Toghril being called back by the revolt of his brother to Persia, Al-Basasiri, at the head of his Syrian levies, entered Bagdad and proclaimed the Caliphate of the Fāṭimid ruler of Egypt. The grand Wazir of Toghril was taken prisoner, and, exposed in an ox-hide to the contempt of the populace, was thus hanged. Even Al-Ḳaim, abjuring his own right, was forced to swear fealty to the rival Caliph. The emblems of the 'Abbasid Caliphate, robes and turban, ancient jewels, and royal pulpit, were sent to Cairo, with Al-Ḳaim's formal renunciation of the dignity.[1] But the hateful usurpation was not to last long. The supporters of Al-Basasiri fell away as Toghril Beg again approached; and just a year after his entry the usurper fled,

499 A.H.

450 A.H. 1058 A.D.

[1] The robes, etc., were sent back by Saladin, but the pulpit is said to be still in Cairo.

A.H. 447-575.

and Al-Kaim reassumed his office. He continued in honour with the Seljuk monarch, who sued for the hand of his daughter. At first refused, the Sultan obtained it in the end, but died shortly after the marriage feast.

155 A.H. 4063 A.D.

Death of Kaim.

Alp Arslan's reign which followed, not only extended far and wide the spiritual dominion of Al-Kaim, but restored to Bagdad a security long unknown, and with it again the arts of commerce, peace, and learning. But we hear little of Al-Kaim, who throughout his prolonged Caliphate showed himself weak and aimless. He died two years after Alp Arslān, and was succeeded by his grandson.

Muktadi, 467-487 A.H. 1075-1094 A.D.

Al-Muktadi, the new Caliph, was honoured by the Sultan Melik Shah, during whose reign the Caliphate was recognised throughout the extending range of Seljuk conquest. Arabia, with the Holy Cities, now recovered from the Fatimid grasp, acknowledged again the spiritual jurisdiction of the 'Abbasids. The Sultan gave his daughter in marriage to the Caliph; and on the birth of a son, dreamed of combining in him at once the Caliph and the Sultan on a common throne. But the dream was fruitless. The lady, dissatisfied, retired with her infant to the court of Ispahan. And the Sultan himself, becoming jealous of the Caliph's interference in the affairs of state, desired him to refrain and retire to Al-Basra; but the death of Melik Shah shortly after, made the command inoperative.

Mustazhir, 487-512 A.H. 1094-1118 A.D.

Al-Mustazhir succeeded his father. During his four-and-twenty years' incumbency there were stirring times; yet whether in the history of the fanatical strife at home, or of the startling Crusade of the Christians in the Syrian lands, the Caliph's name is hardly ever noticed. The Seljuk, whose rule was weakened by intestine broils, cared little for the interests of Islam. Towards the close of the fifth century A.H., the Christian arms spread all over Syria. A bootless attempt was even made by Raimond to fall upon Bagdad by an eastern circuit, and so inflict a deadly blow upon Islam; but the force was attacked by the enemy near to Tokat, scattered and cut to pieces, so that but few escaped. In the year 492 A.H., consternation was spread throughout the land by the capture of Jerusalem, and cruel treatment of its inhabitants. Preachers went about proclaiming the sad story, kindling revenge, and rousing men to recover from

497 A.H. 1103 A.D.

Capture of Jerusalem, July 15, 1099 A.D.

infidel hands the Mosque of 'Omar, and the scene of the Prophet's heavenly flight. But whatever the success elsewhere, the mission failed in the eastern provinces, which were occupied with their own troubles, and moreover cared little for the Holy Land, dominated as it then was by the Fāṭimid faith. Crowds of exiles, driven for refuge to Bagdad, and joined there by the populace, cried out for war against the Franks. But neither Sultan nor Caliph had ears to hear. For two Fridays the insurgents, with this cry, stormed the Great Mosque, broke the pulpit and throne of the Caliph in pieces, and shouted down the service. But that was all. No army went. A.H. 447-575.

The Seljūks at this time, engaged by intestine war in the East, left Bagdad much to itself; and we are startled by finding Al-Mustarshid, son of the preceding Caliph, once more seeking independence in the field. Risings in Al-'Irāḳ were at this time rife. One was led by the famous but unscrupulous general Dubeis, of the Beni Mazyad;[1] in the interest of the Sultan were Āḳsonḳur al-Bursaki, and Zenki, afterwards the terrible foe of the Crusaders. Dubeis, now on one side and now on the other according to the interest of the day, joined a rebel brother of the Sultan in a raid upon Al-'Iraḳ, when the Caliph and Turkish Prefect of Bagdad attacked and put him to flight. After plundering Al-Baṣra, he joined the Crusaders in their attempt upon Aleppo, and afterwards incited a young brother of the Sultan to rebel and make a dash upon the capital; but the Caliph with 12,000 men, anticipating their movements, put them to flight. Mustarshid, 512-529 A.H. Dubeis and Zenki, 516 A.H. 518 A.H. 519 A.H.

A year or two later, the Prefect of the city, finding the Caliph unfriendly and striving to be free, begged Maḥmūd, the Seljuḳ of Al-'Iraḳ, to come to Bagdad and set bounds to his aggressive attitude. Notwithstanding the Caliph's reclamation and threat to leave his palace and retire to the western suburb, the Sultan advanced; on which the Caliph sent an army to seize Wāsiṭ, but Zenki, then Governor of Al-Baṣra, drove it back. The Sultan then occupied the eastern quarter of the city, but still the Caliph refused to come to terms. Then there was fighting in the Hostilities with the Sultan. 521 A.H.

[1] The Mazyadids, a branch of the Beni Asad, held sway in Al-'Iraḳ from 403-545 A.H. (1012-1150 A.D.). Their capital was Al-Ḥilla.

A.H. 447-575.

streets; and the Sultan's troops took to plundering the palace, when the Caliph (who at this time must have had large resources), coming up with 30,000 troops, put them to flight. Indeed, had he not at the moment been deserted by one of his Kurdish chiefs, it would have gone hard with the Sultan. But shortly after Zenki, arriving with heavy reinforcements from Al-Basra, so alarmed Al-Mustarshid that he gave in to the Sultan and pacified him by an offering of money and arms. The Sultan remained the greater part of the year in Bagdad, where he left Zenki as Governor of the city and of all Al-'Irák. This distinguished warrior grew now into great power; he was given Mesopotamia with all its dependencies, including Mosul, Nasibin, and Harran.[1] He then carried his army into Syria, and with an eye on Syria with the view of reducing the Crusaders, having made peace with Jocelin, nearly took Damascus and Emesa. His powerful name at this time caused great joy in Bagdad, where the people said that at last the Crusaders had found men worthy to meet them in the field. Towards the end of Al-Mustarshid's life, however, Zenki fell into difficulty owing to the hostility of the Kurds and the Caliph. On the death of Sultan Mahmúd he was recalled to the East by the designs of certain rebel members of the Seljúk house, stimulated by the Caliph and Dubeis. Here he was worsted and obliged to fly before the Caliph, who pursued him to Mosul, and besieged him there but without success for three months. He now resumed operations in Syria and in 529 A.H. laid siege to Damascus, but was induced, partly by the bravery of the enemy, partly at the instance of the Caliph, to whom the Governor had made some concession in the public prayers, to relinquish the attempt. Recalled again by troubles in the East, he was unable to do much against the Crusaders till after Al-Mustarshid's death.[2]

Career of Zenki.

522 A.H.

527 A.H. 1132 A.D.

529 A.H.

[1] When before Nasibin, Timurtásh the Ortukid sent a letter by a carrier pigeon to tell the Governor that he would come to his succour in five days. The pigeon alighted in the camp, and Zenki substituted another letter with twenty instead of five days, and let it go into the town, which was so dispirited that it held out no longer.

[2] A recent work on this important subject is W. B. Stevenson's *Crusaders in the East.*

A.H. 447-575.

Not long after, Al-Mustarshid embarked on a campaign against the Sultan Mas'ud himself. He attacked the Sultan's army near Hamadān; but, deserted by his troops, was taken prisoner, and pardoned on promising not to quit his palace any more. Left in the royal tent, however, in the Sultan's absence, he was found murdered, as is supposed, by an emissary of the Assassins, who had no love for the Caliph. To remove the suspicion from himself, the Sultan threw the blame on the Caliph's old enemy, Dubeis, and had him put to death. Both Al-Mustarshid and Dubeis are praised by their contemporaries as poets of no mean name;[1] and the Caliph, had he held his hand from the temptation of arms (for him a dangerous anachronism), might have built up the Caliphate by the peaceful arts he was better fitted to employ.

Mustarshid murdered, 529 A.H.

Ar-Rāshid, following his father's steps, made another but equally unfortunate attempt at independence. To avenge his father's death, he insulted the Sultan's envoy who came to demand a heavy largess, incited the mob to plunder his palace, and then, supported by Zenki, who was equally hostile because of the murder of Dubeis, set up a rival Sultan and levied war. The Sultan Mas'ūd hastened to the rebellious capital, and as the Caliph dared not venture outside the walls, laid siege to it. Bagdad, well defended by the river and its canals, long resisted the attack; but at last the Caliph and Zenki, despairing of success, escaped to Mosul. The Sultan's power restored, a council was held, the Caliph deposed, and his uncle, son of Al-Mustaẓhir, appointed in his stead. Ar-Rashid fled to Ispahan, where he fell another victim to the Assassin's dagger.

Rāshid, 529-530 A.H.

The continued disunion and contests of the Seljūḳ house afforded the new Caliph, Al-Muḳtafi, opportunity not only of maintaining his authority in Bagdad, but of extending it throughout Al-'Iraḳ. At the head of an organised force, he was able to defend the Capital from various attacks. But he was ill-advised enough to support the rebellion of a son of the Sultan, who thereupon himself marched against Bagdad and forced the Caliph to take refuge in the eastern

Muḳtafi, 530-555 A.H.

551 A.H.

[1] Dubeis is mentioned with distinction in the *Maḳāmāt of Al-Ḥarīri* (xxxix).

A.H. 447-575. 552 A.H.

quarter, where he was only saved by the recall of the Sultan to quell a more serious rising in the East. Al-Muktafi was, however, again received into favour by the Seljuk, who betrothed himself to one of his daughters. During this Caliphate the Crusade was raging furiously, and Zenki obtaining high distinction as a brave and generous warrior both from friend and foe. At one time hard pressed, he made urgent appeal for help to Bagdad, where, yielding to popular tumult, the Sultan and the Caliph despatched 20,000 men. But in the breast neither of the Seljuks, nor of the Caliph, nor yet of their Amirs, was enthusiasm ever kindled into further effort against the Frank Crusade.

Al-Muktafi is praised by our annalists as virtuous, able, and brave. During his Caliphate of five-and-twenty years, he conducted many minor expeditions against enemies in the vicinity, but none deserving any special notice. Of the next two Caliphs there is little else to say than that they continued to occupy a more or less independent position, with a Wazir and courtly surroundings, and supported by a force sufficient for an occasional campaign of but local and ephemeral import.[1] Meanwhile Nur ed-Din and Saladin were pushing their victorious arms not only against the Crusaders but against the Fatimids of Egypt. That dynasty was at last extinguished, having lasted for two centuries and three-quarters. Their conqueror, Saladin, though himself an orthodox Muslim, dared not at the first proclaim the Sunni faith in the midst of a people still devoted to the tenets and practice of the Shi'a sect. But he soon found himself able to do so; and thus the spiritual supremacy of the 'Abbasids again prevailed, not only in Syria, but throughout Egypt and all its dependencies.

Mustanjid and Mustadi, Caliphs: 555-575 A.H.

End of Fatimid Caliphate, 567 A.H. 1171 A.D.

[1] I may notice, however, a characteristic scene at the elevation of Al-Mustanjid. One of Al-Muktafi's wives wished a younger son of whom she was mother to succeed. She gained over many Amirs to her side, and had their slave-girls armed with daggers to plunge into the new Caliph as he visited his father's remains. He got scent, however, of the plot, and arming himself in mail, with a strong following, attacked the women, wounded some, drowned others, and placed the rebel son and mother in prison.

CHAPTER LXXVII

THE CALIPH AN-NĀṢIR, HIS SON AND GRANDSON

575-640 A.H. 1180-1242 A.D.

Nāṣir, 575-622 A.H. 1180-1225 A.D.

WE now reach an attempt to restore the Caliphate to its ancient *rôle* among the nations; it was but the flicker of an expiring flame. An-Nāṣir, "Defender of the Faith," not only held the Capital in strength, but extended his sway into Mesopotamia on the one hand, and into Persia on the other. Ambitious in his foreign policy, he looked to further conquest; selfish and cruel at home, he caused his first two Wazīrs in fits of jealousy to be put to death.

Relations with the court of Khwārizm, 576-590 A.H.

The grand object of his earlier years was to crush the Seljuḳ power, and on its ruins build up his own. For this, he fomented rebellion, and took the part, from time to time, of discontented branches of the Sultan's house. At last, the Khwārizm Shāh, Takash, at his instigation attacked the Seljūḳ forces, and defeated them, leaving Toghril, last of his race, upon the field. The head of the fallen monarch was despatched to the Caliph to be exposed in front of the palace at Bagdad. Takash, recognised now as supreme ruler of the East, conferred on the Caliph certain provinces of Persia, heretofore held by the Seljuks. In token of his loyalty, An-Naṣir sent by the hand of his Wazir to the conqueror a patent of rule and a dress of honour. But by a stupid want of tact, the Wazir so irritated the churlish Turk, that he attacked the Caliph's troops and routed them. Thereafter hostile relations, or at best hollow truce, prevailed between the two for many years. The Caliph, to be rid of an obnoxious governor of the Shah, against whom he dared not levy open war, had him assassinated by an emissary of the Ismailians, who having dropped their 'Alid tenets, but

591 A.H.

A.H. 575-94.

not the dagger, were now in favour at the court of Bagdad. The Shāh retaliated by having the body of An-Nāṣir's Wazir, who died on a campaign against him, exhumed, and the head stuck up at Khwarizm. Irritated at this and other hostile acts, the Caliph showed his vexation by treating with indignity the pilgrims who came from the East under the Khwarizm flag. But beyond such poor revenge, he was powerless for any open enmity against a Potentate whose rule stretched unopposed from the Jaxartes to the Persian Gulf.

Khwarizm Shāh's advance on Bagdad. 612-614 A.H. 1216-1217 A.D.

Mohammad son of Takash, exasperated at these proceedings, now aimed not simply to crush the temporal rule of the Caliph, but by setting up an anti-Caliph of the house of 'Ali, to paralyse his spiritual power as well. A council of learned doctors, assembled at Khwarizm, accordingly deposed An-Nāṣir as an assassin and enemy of the Faith, and nominated a descendant of 'Ali to the Caliphate, who was prayed for in public and his name struck on the coinage of the Eastern empire. Following up this act, Mohammad turned his resistless arms upon Bagdad. An-Nāṣir in alarm sent a distinguished envoy to plead his cause, but he was haughtily rejected, with the assurance that the conqueror was about to instal the worthier scion of a worthier house upon his master's throne. On this, An-Nāṣir bethought him of an appeal to Jenghiz Khān, the rising Mongol chief, to check Mohammad's progress; and against the pious reclamations of his court, sent an embassy to him;—the *Defender of the Faith* appealing for help to the pagan head of a pagan horde! It would have been all too late, for Mohammad, the Khwarizm Shah, had already taken Eastern 'Irak and Bagdad lay at his mercy, when, by the opportune inclemency of an early winter, he was forced to return to Khorasān. The Caliph soon after found his diplomacy bearing evil fruit. The steppes of Central Asia were set in motion by Jenghiz Khān, and his hordes put to flight the Khwarizm Shah, who died an exile in an island of the Caspian. But it had been well for the Caliph (as we shall see) if he had left these Mongol hosts in their native wilds alone.

Nāṣir invites Jenghiz Khan.

Turning now to the Holy Land, we find that Saladin, ever and again, when hard pressed by the Crusaders

urgently appealed for help to An-Nāṣir who, caring for little beyond his own aggrandisement, contented himself with sending a store of naphtha, with men to use it against the invaders in the field. To 'Alī, one of Saladin's sons, who in the dissensions of the family sought to recover Damascus, he promised help, but it ended in an idle play upon the name;—"'Alī," he said, "on the Prophet's death had no defender; whilst now the Caliph himself is AN-NĀṢIR, that is the Defender of 'Alī."[1]

A.H. 575-640.

Nāṣir leaves Crusaders alone, 577-589 A.H. 1181-1193 A.D.

There is little more to tell of An-Nāṣir. Besides his occasional conquests, he held uninterruptedly 'Irāḳ al-'Arabi from Tekrit to the Gulf, of which he is described as having been a severe and oppressive ruler. There are instances, however, in which when appealed to, he interposed in favour of the weaker party,—though partly, no doubt, from the fear of too powerful antagonists. His long reign of forty-seven years is chiefly marked by ambitious and unscrupulous dealings with the Tartar chiefs, and by his hazardous invocation of the Mongol hordes, which so soon brought his own dynasty to an end. But in his day, there was comparative peace at Bagdad; learning flourished; schools and libraries were patronised; while refuges for the poor, and other works of public interest, were encouraged.

Nāṣir's Caliphate.

His son and grandson succeeded An-Nāṣir during the next eighteen years; but there is little said of them beyond that they were mild and virtuous. The Crusades still dragged on their weary course, while the heirs of Saladin were contending bitterly among themselves. The Caliphate, however, concerned itself little with the wars in Syria. It was kept in frequent alarm by the Tartar inroads. The Mongols came on one occasion as near as Ḥolwān and Khānikīn, and on another even to Samarrā, so that the terrified inhabitants of Bagdad hastened to put their defences in order. But the danger for the moment passed off, and peace still reigned in the city. It was but the lull before the fatal storm.

Ẓāhir and Mustanṣir, the two succeeding Caliphs, 622-640 A.H. 1225-1242 A.D.

[1] The Wazīr of this prince was brother of our Annalist, Ibn al-Athīr.

CHAPTER LXXVIII

AL-MUSTA'ṢIM, THE LAST OF THE CALIPHS

640-656 A.H. 1242-1258 A.D.

Musta'ṣim last Caliph, 640-656 A.H. 1242-1258 A.D.

In the year 640 A.H. Al-Musta'ṣim became Caliph,—name vainly meaning *He that maketh the Lord his refuge*;—a weak and miserly creature, in whose improvident hands the Caliphate, even in quieter times, would have fared ill. Between the Chief Secretary, an ambitious and unprincipled courtier and the Wazir Ibn al-Alkami bitter enmity prevailed. The Wazir, strange to say, was a Shi'ite; as such he is of course denounced by orthodox annalists, who even accuse him of seeking relief for his persecuted fellow-sectaries by treacherous communication with the Mongols. Others assign him a more patriotic *rôle*; and, indeed, we need not to travel beyond the imbecility of the Caliph and the demoralisation of his now shrunken kingdom, for the causes of impending ruin.

His character.

Of Al-Musta'ṣim himself there is little to relate. As characteristic of his meanness, we are told that he appropriated the state jewels of the Chief of Kerak, who with difficulty obtained their partial restitution by proclaiming the Caliph's dishonesty before the assembled pilgrims at Mecca. His influence was felt, however, somewhat in Egypt. The 'Abbasid cause being now recognised there, the Sultan sought and obtained at Al-Musta'ṣim's hands recognition of his title and the insignia of investiture. The Caliph also repeatedly interposed to mediate between the Ruler of Damascus and the Sultan of Egypt.[1] It was for his interest to help towards the establishment of a

[1] When appealed to by the two rival claimants, he sent one of them a knife with jasmin decorations as proof of his good will, but the robes of installation he declined to send till afterwards. He was opposed

stable government, such as the Eiyūbi in Syria, which might shield the Caliphate from its impending fate. But it was all too late. A.H. 640-656.

Meanwhile, as a tiger watching its prey, the Mongol was preparing from afar for the fatal irruption on the fair provinces of the West. Al-Musta'ṣim had been now thirteen years on the throne, when Hūlāgū proclaimed a campaign against the Ismailians, and invited all to join in crushing the hateful race. The call met with no response from the Caliph. In the following year, the overthrow of the Ismailian power left the Conqueror free for his designs on the farther West. The state of Bagdad may be surmised at this time from its being the theatre of unceasing strife between the two hostile ministers already named, who accused each the other of treason. The Secretary went so far as even to rise against the Caliph himself, and, with the mob at his back, force his hand not only to declare him blameless, but to have his name recited in the public prayers. Hūlāgū's designs on the West, 653 A.H. 1255 A.D.

Just then, Hūlāgū, who was resting at Hamadān, sent a threatening embassy to Bagdad. First, he upbraided Al-Musta'ṣim for having failed to aid in the campaign against the Ismailians, as the enemies of mankind. Now, therefore, he bade him to raze the defences of Bagdad; and commanded that, to learn his will, he must forthwith repair in person to his Court, or else send his Wazīr and chief officers for the purpose;—which done, he was ready to leave Al-Musta'ṣim in secure possession of what he had. The foolish Caliph in reply descanted on the multitudes ready to hasten for the defence of the Vicegerent of the Prophet; and while declining to dismantle the city, sent an Envoy with presents and an otherwise soft reply. An immediate advance was the sole response of Hūlāgū. His advance on Bagdad, 655 A.H. 1257 A.D.

The helpless Caliph, persuaded by his Wazīr, had already marshalled an embassy of submission, when the Secretary and excited populace forced him instead to send a letter of defiance to the Conqueror, reminding him of City seized and sacked, 656 A.H. 1258 A.D.

to female rulers. On one occasion, the Queen was elevated to be Sultana of Egypt, and the Caliph, when asked for his recognition, replied that if the Amirs could find no man equal to the duty, he would send them one.

A.H. 640-656. the Saffārids' fate, and of others who had dared attack the "City of peace." The warning was not without effect upon the superstitious Mongol, whose fears were now excited, and now quelled, by his astrologers. At last, satisfied of the safety of the enterprise, he made his Tartar hordes, from every side, converge upon the fated city. There the weakling at one moment wildly sought to gather troops for its defence; at another sent offers of a yearly tribute to his enemy. Ever and anon he looked for some ready fortune, such as had saved in like case his predecessors, and expected even the hand of Heaven to

i. 656 A.H. Jan., 1258 A.D. interpose. In the first month of 656 A.H. the Mongols routed a column which held Al-Anbār, and pursued the few survivors to the western quarter of the city. Shortly after, Hūlagu himself, marching down the eastern bank, attacked the opposite quarter. In vain the Caliph sent his sons to plead for mercy: in vain he deputed the Wazīr to seek for terms. All that could be wrung from the conqueror was safety for the chief inhabitants. Hūlagū had already stormed part of the city when he sent for the Commander-in-chief of the Caliph and his Secretary to

4th ii. A.H. Feb. 10 arrange for the cessation of hostilities. They went, but notwithstanding promise of safe-conduct, were put to death, with all their followers. Nothing remained for Al-Musta'ṣim but to go forth himself, which he did at the beginning of the second month, followed by his sons and the leading citizens. They were received with outward courtesy. The Caliph and his sons were remanded to a tent; and the inhabitants warned to quit the city, which would then be given up to plunder. The wretched Caliph, following in the tyrant's suite, was forced to witness the sacking of his palace, and there point out his hidden treasures with golden ingots of untold weight. After many days of rapine and conflagration, Hūlagū put an end to the pillage, and took the city for his own. Al-

Last of the Caliphs put to death. 14th ii. 656 A.H. Feb. 20, 1258 A.D. Musta'ṣim, now in the Mongol's way, was put to death in the middle of the second month, 656 A.H., with all the members of the house on whom hands could be laid. And so, suffering a fate similar to that which five centuries before it had itself inflicted on the Umeiyads, the 'Abbasid dynasty came to a violent and untimely end.

CHAPTER LXXIX

THE SO-CALLED CALIPHATE UNDER THE MEMLŪKS OF EGYPT

659-926 A.H. 1261-1520 A.D.

Mustanṣir, the Egyptian Caliph, 659 A.H. 1261 A.D.

THE Caliphate, long in hopeless decrepitude, had now disappeared, and there remained no possibility of its revival. But a shadow survived in Egypt,—a race of mock-Caliphs, having the name without the substance; a mere spectre as it were. Shortly after his accession to the throne, Beibars, hearing that a scion of 'Abbāsid descent survived in Syria, conceived the design of setting him up as Caliph, and of receiving at his hands a spiritual blessing and title to the Sultanate. Sought out from his hiding, the 'Abbāsid was brought to Cairo. At his approach, the Sultan with his Court went forth in pomp to meet him. Even the Jews and Christians had to follow in the train, bearing the Book of the Law, and the Evangel, in their hands. Soon after this, Al-Mustanṣir Caliph-nominate, robed in gorgeous apparel, girt with the sword of State and mounted on a white steed, was installed in the office, and sworn fealty to by Beibars, his Amirs, and the people; which function ended, there was read from the pulpit a pompous patent by the Caliph, conferring on Beibars the sovereign title, and impressing upon him the duty of warring for the faith, and other obligations which Al-Mustanṣir now imposed upon him. Then, with sound of trumpet and shouts of joy, the royal procession wended its way through the streets back to the palace;—the Caliph following the Sultan on horseback,—all the rest on foot.

A few months later, Beibars resolved to reinstate his

A.H. 659-926.

His attempt on Bagdad.

so-called Caliph in Bagdad, and accompanied him for this end to Damascus, with an army. There, however, the Mosul chiefs, who were to have joined the expedition, warned Beibars of possible danger to himself from a resuscitated Caliphate; and so, withdrawing from the enterprise, the Sultan suffered his *Protégé* to pursue his march with a diminished following, composed chiefly of Bedawi clans. The Mongol governor of Bagdad met the force at Hit, defeated the Caliph, and left him dead upon the field.

Killed in battle, 660 A.H. 1262 A.D.

Line of nominal Caliphs, 661-926 A.H. 1263-1520 A.D.

The following year, Beibars secured another scion of 'Abbasid descent, and installed him as Caliph, but now on an altogether different footing,—that, namely, of a priestly attendant at his Court or, as we might say, a high ecclesiastic, to give at each succession his benediction and formal title to the throne, and also to lead the public prayers. A mere creature of the Court, he was lodged, more or less under surveillance, in the citadel, and occupied a quite dependent and, in the main, servile place.

Their position and functions.

The succession of such Egyptian Caliphs was maintained unbroken in the same line, on the nomination of the Sultan of the day, throughout the dynasty of the Memlūks, which for two centuries and a half forms one of the most painful episodes of tyranny and bloodshed in the history of the world. During this long period we hear little of these Caliphs, excepting in so far as it devolved upon them to enthrone each new Sultan, and validate his title with the sanction, as it were, of the Muslim church. The Caliph also presided at the public prayers, in which his name was pronounced after that of the reigning Monarch. Beyond this, the notices are sparse and rare, and for the most part unimportant. Here we read of a Caliph carried in the Sultan's train to witness his conquests, or perchance with him to be taken captive by the enemy; anon we hear of another imprisoned by his Sovereign, or it may be deposed and exiled for interfering in the affairs of State, or conspiring against the throne. But once, we find a Caliph himself elevated to the Sultanate; not, however, in virtue of his office, and but for half a year. Now he is preaching a holy war against the Mongols or Osmanlis; again he is employed

in the more fitting task of mediating peace, or heading a procession of Muslims, Jews, and Christians, each holding aloft their scriptures, and praying for deliverance from the plague. In the eighth century of the Hijra, the Caliph, in company with the Sultan, received a deputation bearing precious gifts from Moḥammad, son of Taghlaḳ, who prayed for a patent of investiture from him, and for the mission of a Doctor of 'Abbāsid lineage to instruct his Indian subjects in the faith. But, whether in honour or in neglect, we seldom find the so-called Caliph, throughout these two hundred and sixty years, other than the tool and servant of the ruler of the day.

A.H. 659-926.

But a new power now rose in the East, which was soon to crush the Memlūk dynasty, that namely of the Osmānlīs.[1] Like other hordes that overspread the West, these, in the seventh century of the Hijra, issued from the steppes of Central Asia beyond the Caspian. In the eighth century they achieved the conquest of Asia Minor, and eventually crossing the Bosphorus, planted the crescent on the walls of Byzantium.

Rise of the Osmānlīs,

After a long struggle on the plains of Syria, the Memlūk arms finally gave place to the Osmānli. In the year 922 A.H., on the fateful field of Merj Dābiḳ, the Egyptian troops suffered defeat, and Ḳānsūḥ al-Ghūri, the last but one of the Memlūks, was left on the field. The remnant fled to Damascus; but the Caliph Al-Mutawakkil, who had followed in Ḳānsūḥ's train, waited on Selīm the conqueror at Aleppo, and was by him courteously received. Tūmanbey, the last of the Egyptian dynasty, vainly endeavoured to resist the advance of his enemy, whose offers of peace were rejected. On the Egyptian plain of Rīdānīya his troops were finally defeated, about the close of 923 A.H.; and on the first days of the following year, Selīm made his triumphal entry into Cairo, with the Caliph in his train. There Al-Mutawakkil used his influence with the Conqueror to stay the tumult and rapine raging in the city, and to save the Memlūk chiefs, of whom some thousands fell victims to Osmanli hate. The Sultan, who had fled across the Nile, was betrayed

who conquer the Memlūks, 922 A.H. 1516 A.D.

Selīm enters Cairo, i. 923 A.H. Jan., 1517 A.D.

[1] So called from 'Othmān (pronounced in the West *Osman*), son of Ertoghral, who settled in Asia Minor in the latter half of the seventh century, A.H.

A.H. 659-926.

by a Bedawi chief, whose protection he had sought, and put to death.

The Caliph carried to Constantinople, 923 A.H. 1517 A.D.

Thus came to an end the dark and hateful Memlûk rule. Selim rested eight months in Cairo, abandoning himself to a course of dissipation, of which even a Memlûk might have been ashamed. He then returned to Constantinople, and with other Egyptians carried Al-Mutawakkil also with him. There at first he was held as Caliph in high honour and esteem; but this he gradually forfeited by a graceless and unworthy life. Two or three years later, convicted of the misappropriation of property committed to his trust in Egypt, he was cast into confinement in the fortress of Saba Kuliat. Selim's successor, Suleiman, set him at liberty, and allowed him to return to the Capital, where he lived for a time on a miserable pittance. Shortly after, he resigned his rights into the hands of the Osmânli monarch, and retired into Egypt. We hear no more of him but that he joined a rising there, 926 A.H., and died in the year 945. Thus ended the last shadow of the 'Abbâsid Caliphate.

Imprisoned, 926 A.H. 1520 A.D.

Resigns office into Sultan's hands.

Claim of Osmânli Sultans to the title.

In virtue of Al-Mutawakkil's cession of his title, the Osmanli Sultans make pretension not only to the sovereignty of the Muslim world, but to the Caliphate itself—that is, to the spiritual, as well as political, power held by the Successors of the Prophet. Were there no other bar, the Tartar blood which flows in their veins would make the claim untenable. Even if their pedigree by some very flattering fiction could be traced up to Koreishite stock, the claim would be but a fond anachronism. The Caliphate ended with the fall of Bagdad. The illusory resuscitation by the Memlûks was a lifeless show; the Osmânli Caliphate, a dream.

CHAPTER LXXX

REVIEW

The Umeiyad, better than the 'Abbāsid dynasty.

In gathering up the more important points of this history, it is to me clear that the palmiest days of Islām, after those of Abu Bekr and 'Omar, were the Umeiyad. Mu'awiya and Al-Welid are not eclipsed by either Hārūn or Al-Ma'mūn. The tendency of the annals on which we are dependent, written as they were under the influence of 'Abbāsid supremacy, is to exalt that dynasty at the expense of the Umeiyad. Even with all its adventitious colouring, the 'Abbāsid reign pales before the glory of the Umeiyad which, by its conquests, laid broad the foundations of Islam in the East and in the West. Moreover, the wholesale butcheries, cold-blooded murders, and treacherous assassinations, which cast a lurid light on the court of As-Saffāh and his successors, find, as a whole, no counterpart among the Umeiyads. And if we regard the environment of the throne, although some of the Umeiyads were dissolute to the last degree, and sometimes cruel also, I should incline to strike the balance, even as regards morality, in favour altogether of Damascus. The history of the 'Abbāsids can bring nothing to compare with the exemplary lives of 'Omar II., or of Hishām; and, whether from the point of natural law, or of Muslim obligation, the scandals of Bagdad without doubt cast into the shade anything that can be charged against Damascus.

Arab support the secret of Umeiyad greatness.

The chief reason for the superiority of the Umeiyads was the manly, frugal, and hardy habit of the Arab nation on whom they leant. These formed the main staple of their court, their ministers, their generals, and associates. Conquest and spoil of war had already heated them, long before their fall, to luxurious living and voluptuous indulgence.

But even so, the love of desert life, indigenous in the Arab, was to some extent corrective of the laxity and demoralisation now creeping over the Muslim world. Under the 'Abbasids all was changed. Chief commands, both civil and military, fell rapidly into the hands of Turkish and Persian adventurers. The Arabs, too, in rank and file, were as a rule disbanded; and the Imperial forces recruited from the tribes of Central Asia or from the Berbers of the West. And so the Arabs—those that yet maintained their simplicity and vigour uncontaminated by city life—retired to the desert; ready, instead of as heretofore the prop and pillar of the Caliphate, to follow any outlaw, Zenji or Carmathian, appealing to their innate love of rapine, lawlessness, and plunder.

Influence of Persia.

The influence of Persia affected the spiritual, intellectual, and philosophical development of the nation. While, on the one hand, it enervated and tended to demoralise the "City of Peace," on the other, with the help of Greece, it introduced the era of science, philosophy, and art, which formed the glory of Al Ma'mūn and his immediate successors, and overshadowed the more substantial, though less lustrous grandeur of the Umeiyad line. Persian influence was also strongly in favour of Shi'a doctrine and transcendental philosophy. The countries in which Arabs mostly spread and settled, and where consequently Arab sentiment most prevailed, are still those devoted to the Orthodox faith as set forth by its four great Doctors. Where there has been inclination to diverge, it has been, not in the direction of 'Alid doctrine, but of the Khariji schism,—that namely which takes its stand on the simplicity of the faith as first delivered by the Prophet. Revivals follow a corresponding course. Amongst the Orthodox, the quickened spirit shows itself in implicit return to the letter of the Kor'ān; in the protest against forms and superstitions inconsistent with the sacred text; in outbursts of zeal to "fight in the ways of the Lord"; and generally, in a tendency (as amongst the Wahhabis) towards the ancient tenets of Khāriji theocracy. Among the Shi'a, on the other hand, the spirit of revival breaks out in a wild and mystical devotion, Ṣūfi or Mo'tazili; and in the profane extravagances of the divine Imamate or other emanation of the Deity. Persia remains the only

Shī'a and orthodoxy,

important nation devoted to the Shī'a faith. In India, the Emperors, being of Turkish blood, were generally of the Sunni faith. They encouraged the immigration of vast crowds of Arabs from their native soil, especially from the Holy Cities, who were strictly orthodox; and so throughout Hindustan the Sunna has always overshadowed the Shī'a.[1]

Bitter feeling between the two.

Between Turkey and Persia there is also a broad distinction in respect of tolerance. The Osmānlīs, notwithstanding close contact with enlightened nations, are, in virtue of their orthodoxy, intolerant of the least divergence from the faith; while Persia, following in the wake of the Mo'tazili Caliphs, is less impatient of other creeds, and more amenable to outer influence.[2] In other respects, too, the ancient sentiment dividing Sunni and Shi'a is as bitter now as at the time when 'Alī cursed Mu'āwiya, and Mu'āwiya cursed 'Alī, in the daily public service.[3] The hopeless schism has tended to slacken the progress of Islām, and abate its aggressive force. Thus recently when a deadly blow was aimed at the head of the Muslim empire on this side the Bosphorus, the sectarians of Persia, through hate and jealousy of the Sunni creed, declined to rally round the banner of the Crescent; and, indeed, so far as any help or sympathy from the Shi'a went, Islām might have been blotted out of Europe altogether. The Sunnis scorns the Shī'a; and the follower of the Shi'a in his turn spits on the graves of those great Caliphs, 'Omar and Abu Bekr, to whom he owes it that Islām spread thus marvellously, nay, even that it survived the birth.

Islām stationary.

The Islām of to-day is substantially the Islām we have seen throughout this history. Swathed in the bands of the Kor'ān, the Muslim faith, unlike the Christian, is powerless to adapt itself to varying time and place, keep pace with the

[1] *Sunnīs* are those who hold by the *Sunnas*, or precedent, established by the practice of Mohammad, as handed down by tradition. They also recognise the title of the first three Caliphs, which the *Shi'a* deny.

[2] The bigotry of the Persians appears mostly in matters of purification, remnants perhaps of their ancient faith. Baths and Mosques are polluted by the presence of an infidel. Curious, also, that the Persians to this day curse Al-Ma'mūn as the poisoner of 'Alī ar-Rida, his son-in-law, and use his name as a term of abuse. See above, p. 500.

[3] P. 271.

march of humanity, direct and purify the social life, or elevate mankind. Freedom, in the proper sense of the word, is unknown; and this apparently, because in the body politic, the spiritual and the secular are hopelessly confounded. Hence we fail of finding anywhere the germ of popular government or approach to free and liberal institutions. The nearest thing to such was the brotherhood of Islam; but that, as a controlling power, was confined to the Arab race, and, with its dominancy, disappeared. The type and exemplar of Muslim rule is the absolute and autocratic monarch alternating at times with the licence of lawless soldiery. The only check upon the despot is the law of the Kor'an, expounded by the learned, and enforced by the sentiment, or it may be by the uprising, of the nation.

Domestic institutions.

Nor has there been any change in the conditions of social life. Polgamy[1] and servile concubinage are still as ever the curse and blight of Islam. By these may the unity of the household at any time be broken; the purity and virtue of the family tie weakened; the vigour of the upper classes sapped; and the throne itself liable to doubtful or contested succession. As to female slavery, the Muslim will not readily abandon an indulgence recognised by his scripture. Its influence on the master is really more to be deprecated than on the wretched subject of the institution. However much domestic slavery is ameliorated by the kindly influences which in Muslim lands surround it, still the licence of servile concubinage fixes its withering grasp with more damaging effect on the owner of the slave than on the slave herself.

Divorce.

Hardly less evil is the one-sided power of divorce, at the mere word and will of the husband. Hanging over every household like the sword of Damocles, it must affect the tone of society at large; for, even if seldom put in force, it cannot fail, as a potential influence, to weaken the marriage bond and to lower the dignity and self-respect of woman.

The veil.

Nor is it otherwise with the Veil, and such domestic injunctions of the Kor'an as exclude woman from her

[1] The most enlightened Muslims, however, admit the desirability of monogamy. Several of the most eminent Egyptians of late years have had only one wife.

legitimate place and function in social life.[1] The exclusion may, indeed, be little loss to her. But by this unreasonable law, mankind at large, beyond the threshold of the *ḥarim*, loses the grace and brightness of the sex, and the purifying influence of their presence. Hence the cheerless aspect of Muslim outdoor life, and the drear austerity of their social gatherings. Opinion may differ as to the interdict on games of chance, and even the moderate use of wine. The double prohibition has no doubt tended to aggravate the gloom and gravity we speak of; but it may gladly be admitted that the absence of intemperance,—though with too frequent exception (as in this history we have seen) in the upper classes,—is a spectacle in Moḥammadan lands much to be commended.

Immobility of Islām.

The institutions just noticed form an integral part of the teaching of Islām. They are bound up in the charter of its existence. A reformed faith that should question the divine authority on which they rest, or attempt by rationalistic selection or abatement to effect a change, would be Islam no longer. That they tend to keep the Muslim nations in a backward and, in some respects barbarous, state, cannot be doubted. It is still true that, as at Damascus, Bagdad, and Cordova, an era of great prosperity has at times prevailed. Commerce and speculation (the law of usury notwithstanding) were at such times advanced; the arts of peace were cultivated; national prejudice was to some extent lessened, and liberality of sentiment promoted, by travel and intercourse with other peoples; while literature, science, and philosophy were prosecuted with marvellous success. But it was all short-lived, because civilisation, not penetrating the family, was superficial. It failed to leaven domestic life. The canker-worm of polygamy, divorce, servile concubinage, and the veil, lay at the root. And society, withering under the influence of these, relapsed into semi-barbarism again.

Throughout this work we have often met with virtue

[1] A movement has been going on for some years in the direction of the emancipation of woman, and especially abolition of the veil. At the opening of the Turkish Parliament by the Sultan in December 1908, the Turkish women who viewed the procession through the streets were unveiled.

How far the Creed is responsible for the dark spots in this history.

and nobility, and acknowledged them gladly, whether in places high or low. But it has also been a duty, especially in the latter half of the volume, to thread our painful way in labyrinths of bloodshed and iniquity, and through purlieus of Courts, the sink of profligacy, treachery, and vice. It may be difficult to say how far the tree is here to be judged by the fruit; in other words, what of all this is due to the creed, and what to other causes, and even in spite of the creed. But, this difficulty notwithstanding, the conclusion can scarcely fail to force itself upon the impartial reader, that much of the dark retrospect is the legitimate result of the laws and institutions just described. In one respect, indeed, there is no room for doubt; and that is in respect of intolerance and religious warfare. It is by direct command of his Master that the Muslim fights against the Jew and Christian "until they pay tribute with the hand, and are humbled"; and it is by a like command that he attacks the Heathen even to the bitter end. "Fight against the Idolaters," is the command which the Muslim holds divine,—"Wheresoever ye find them; take them captive, besiege them, and lie in wait for them in every ambush." If Christian nations have too often drawn the sword in propagation of their faith, it was in direct contravention of their Master's word,—"If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight; . . . but now is My kingdom not from hence." Far different is the Muslim's case. Tribes and peoples for ages rushed into the battlefield, fulfilling what they believed their Maker's law, "to fight in the ways of the Lord"; and as its immediate effect, the world was drenched in blood from the Mediterranean to the Caspian Sea, and multitudes of men and women taken captive, and as such held in slavery. Yet with all this, how true has come the Saviour's other word,—"All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." At last the Crescent wanes before the Cross.

Decline of political status.

For now the political ascendency of the faith is doomed. Every year witnesses a sensible degree of subsidence. In the close connection of the spiritual with the civil power, this cannot but affect the prestige of the religion itself; but nevertheless the religion maintains, and will no doubt long continue to maintain, its hold upon the people

singularly unimpaired by the decline of its political supremacy.

The Muslim world stationary.

As regards the spiritual, social, and dogmatic aspect of Islām, there has been neither progress nor material change. Such as we found it in the days of the Caliphate, such is it also at the present day. Christian nations may advance in civilisation, freedom, and morality, in philosophy, science, and the arts, but Islām stands still. And thus stationary, so far as the lessons of the history avail, it will remain.

These closing sentences of Sir William Muir's work have been left standing because they express what at the time, and even up to a few years ago was the opinion universally held by Western peoples regarding the condition and prospects of the East, especially of Mohammadan countries. But within the last few years a change has come over the Asiatic world. The echoes of the Russo-Japanese war have awaked the East from its long sleep. Turkey and Persia, China and India are stirring with new life. The war in the far East has shown that Asia no longer lies at the mercy of the Western nations, and that the Mongol and the Semite are as capable of developing the material side of civilisation as the Aryan. With the aspiration after national freedom have been joined the claims of personal and constitutional liberty. In the autumn of 1906 the late Shāh of Persia, Muẓaffar ed-Dīn, summoned a Mejlis, or national assembly, which, after many struggles, including the deposition of his son and successor, now, through the courage chiefly of the Bakhtiari chiefs of Ispahān, appears to be firmly established in the capital under the present Shāh Aḥmed Mirza. In 1908 the Sultan of Turkey, the personification of all that was worst in Oriental despotism, was compelled by the demands of the Army, to restore the constitution of 1876. His breach of faith led to his deposition and the establishment, by an almost bloodless revolution, of parliamentary representation in that country; and, in spite of differences of race, language, and religion, this youngest House of Commons does its work

well under the Sultan Mohammad V. Thus the two countries where absolute despotism reigned supreme have become as free as any nation in Europe.

But the most remarkable thing about the revolution, in Turkey especially, is that it was not a religious, but a national and patriotic movement, in which all classes of subjects took part. The parliament which was opened by the late Sultan in December 1908 included among its members, Turks, Arabs, Druses, Jews, Armenians, and Greeks. Men of all religions recognised that they were united by the tie of a common country. The Committee of Union and Progress did not restrict their choice of candidates for seats in the first parliament to those who professed the Muslim faith. Their nominees for Smyrna and Salonika were Jews. Yet they were strong enough to compel the resignation of the Grand Wazir Kiamil Pasha, when he opposed their wishes. Their relations with the Liberal Union, the organisation representative of the non-Muslim electorate, have been on the whole friendly. Moreover, the ancient hostility of Turkey and Persia has given way before the common struggle for liberty.

These changes foreshadow others yet to come, and it is always possible that in the end, as in the case of Spain, present loss may turn to future gain, and that the nations of the East after their long sleep may awake to a new life, which will surpass even the splendours of the early Caliphate.

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